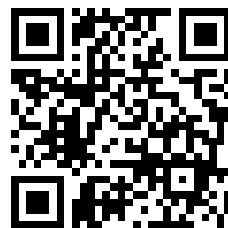

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A Happy New Year.

ONCE A WEEK.

FOURTH SERIES.

VOLUME IX.

SEPTEMBER, 1878, TO FEBRUARY, 1879.

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A London Legend.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXIV.—HOMES IN LONDON.



UNE in Bennett's-rents, and a bright, breezy day; when for a whole hour the god that kisseth carrion shone down into the court, to lick up every trace of green damp and moisture from the foul, broken pavement. There was a pump in Bennett's-rents, and a channel ran down the centre of the paving, whose broken slabs rose and fell in wet weather to the passing step, spurring out little founts of dirty water, while the channel itself was choked, from being turned into a receptacle for the superfluous odds and ends

of the inhabitants—to wit: potato, turnip, and carrot peelings; the shells of whelks, periwinkles, mussels, and crabs; egg-shells were at times seen there, as also the nacreous covering of the oyster, but not as the *débris* of banquets, since these latter were only brought in by the grotto-building children, and the former thrown out by the jobbing bookbinder's finisher when robbed of their albumen for purposes of trade. Heads, tails, and the vertebrae of plaice, or the real Yarmouth bloater, were common objects of the shore. Babies had been seen in that channel, which possessed a certain charm from its safety, since the child that rolled in rolled no farther. It was the favourite resort of the small fry of the neighbourhood—a neighbourhood that rejoiced in small children, and big babies of an elastic nature, which prevented falls and contusions from stopping their growth—for the refuse in that channel could be raked about and poked at with bits of stick to the formation of dams, where walnut cock-boats could be sailed, or mussel-prows launched; and occasional visitants from as far off as Lower Serle's-place had been known to perch there and peck, for the channel was famed for its ample supply of impromptu playthings for the little savages of the place. A large lobster-claw found therein had formed the coral of Dredge minor, whose father worked at Covent-garden Market, and never slept at home by night. Little Jenny Perkins wore a necklace composed of periwinkle shells; while whelk shells, stuck at the end of thick pieces of firewood, and previously filled with peas, formed rattles that were indestructible.

Like Lower Serle's-place, Bennett's-rents was famous for its prolific inhabitants. Long as daylight lasted, there was a dense small population of half-dressed aborigines, hooting, racing about, playing, and quarrelling, aided in their efforts by levies from others of the rags of Lincoln's-inn. Why called Bennett's-rents was not obvious, though it might

have been from the hideous cracks and seams in the frouzy old houses, whose windows looked as if they had been in a brown-paper-and-rag war, in which glass had suffered a terrible defeat, and submitted now, with an ill grace, to the presence of the new settlers.

But the children did not have the channel all to themselves, for at early dawn the pigeons from the house-tops paid it visits, and, in spite of broken, dissipated-looking chimney-pots, falling-out mortar, and shattered, soot-covered tiles, there were many soft-eyed, iridescent-hued birds dwelling upon the roofs of the houses in Bennett's-rents; and, more especially upon Sunday mornings, an observer from some high edifice might have seen dirty-faced men, in hairy caps, rising out of trap-doors in roofs, like "Mr. F's aunt" through the factory-floor, and, when halfway out, and forming prominent objects among little wildernesses of sooty, lath-made cages and traps, amusing themselves by waving red-cotton handkerchiefs tied to the end of sticks, for the purpose of keeping their flights of pigeons high in air.

A rumour had spread through the court that something was to be seen in the neighbouring street, when out trooped the children from the narrow entrance, and comparative silence reigned, till place and echoes were alike mocked by a man with his cry of "Rag—bone!" but his was labour in vain: he took nothing further from the Rents to glut the shop of Mrs. Slagg, and, reaching the end of the place, he departed with his bag still light, and the court knew him no more that day, though there were rags enough in every house to have filled his sack again and again, and drawn down the index of his portable weighing-machine to the furthest limit. Still there was another sound to be heard; for Mr. William Jarker, of the heavy jaw, flattened nose, and general bull-dog aspect, was above his attic, whistling to his pigeons, as the Reverend Arthur Sterne stood by the reeking channel, gazing up into the strip of blue sky above his head, and following the circling flight of the birds as he muttered sadly to himself, "O, that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest!" but the next instant he smiled sadly, as he recalled work undone, duties to perform, and then thought of the rest and fate of these birds; wondering, too, how it came that they should form the "fancy" of the roughest of the rough. Then he paused with his foot upon the threshold of the house where Septimus Hardon lodged, for there, in the hot, close London court, came gushing down, in tones of purest liquid melody, the wild, heaven-gate trill of a lark: "Tsweet-tsweet-tsweet-tsweet!" every trill an intoxicating, magic draught, drunk in by the ear, and—a very opium—bearing the bearer far, far away to green fields, shady woodlands, golden hill-sides, and sparkling brooks; louder, louder and more rapturous, thrilling the air around; rising and falling, echoing from far and near, but ever sweet and pure, even joyous at times; and, praise the song of the wild bird as you may, there is that in the trill of its caged brother in some close London alley that shall sound the sweeter in the sadness engendered by the surroundings, for it whispers of brighter

scenes and purer homes, bearing you with it far, far away from the misery where you stay.

Even Bill Jarker ceased waving his handkerchief, took his short, black pipe from his mouth, and listened; the curate thought of days when, with a soft, white hand in his, he had wandered over the downs, listening to those ever-sweet English notes; while from the window above was stretched forth the fair, shapely head of Lucy Grey, her eyes sparkling, and lips apart, as if to command silence; and then, as the curate looked up, there was a slight start, a faint flush of colour in the girl's pale cheeks, and her head was quickly withdrawn.

A tall, slight, careworn man was the curate of St. Magdalen's; hair sprinkled with grey, deep lines crossing his brow, and yet there was a smile of ineffable sweetness lingering about his mouth—a smile which, far from telling of weakness, whispered of sorrow, tenderness, patience, and charity.

The few minutes of tranquillity had passed. The door of the house stood open—as, in fact, did that of every other house in the thickly-inhabited court; the children began to troop back, Bill Jarker took to his pipe and pigeon-flying, and, with thoughts trembling between the ideal and the real, the curate entered the door before him.

It was not a Saturday, or he would have found the ascent of the stairs troublesome; but he well knew the manners and customs of the natives, and abstained from making his visits on that day of the week, for on Saturdays there was a rule carried out (one set in force by the landlady), that the attics cleaned down to the second floor, the second floor to the first, the first floor to the passage, which last portion fell to the lot of the occupants of the parlours, front and back—two families who took it in turns to make the dirt upon the said passage wet, and then to smear it from side to side with a flannel, so that the boards always wore the aspect of having been newly-hearthstoned with a lump of brown clay, if the simile will stand. Consequently, upon this seventh day of the week, when the lodgers were busy, and Mrs. Sims could be heard sniffing as she “did Hardons’ bit,” the journey upwards was dangerous; for if the traveller avoided the snares and pitfalls formed by divers pails and brown pans, or even, maybe, a half-gallon can from the public at the corner if the pail was engaged—if he saved himself from slipping on the sloping, wet boards, and fell over no kneeling scrubber in a dark corner, he most certainly heard low-muttered abuse heaped upon his head for “trapesing” over the newly-cleaned stairs—abuse direct or indirect, according to the quality of the traveller.

Not, then, being a Saturday, Mr. Sterne entered the house known as No. 7—by tradition only, for the brass number, after being spun round by one pin for some months, suddenly disappeared—passing along to the worn stairs, two flights of which he ascended, creaking and cracking the while beneath his weight, and every one sloping so that it seemed hanging to the wall to save itself from falling. He paused for an instant upon the landing opposite Septimus Hardon's rooms, and listened to the rapid beating “click-click” of Lucy's sewing machine; then up two more flights; and again, without pause,

up two more, which groaned with weakness and old age; while sunken door-frames, doors that would not shut, and various other indications, told of the insecure condition of the house. And now once more he paused upon the top landing, where some domestic spider had spun a web of string, stretching it from rusty nail to rusty nail, for the purpose of drying clothes—garments now, fortunately for the visitor, absent.

Here fell upon the ear the twitterings of many birds, and the curate's face again lighted up as the song of the lark once more rang out loud and clear, apparently from outside the window of the attic before whose door he stood. But his reverie was interrupted by a sharp, shrill voice, which he could hear at intervals giving orders in a quick, angry tone. Then followed the lashing of a whip, a loud yelp, or the occasional rapid beat of a dog's tail upon the floor. At last, turning the handle of the rickety door, the visitor entered.

“*En avant! Halte là! Ah-h-h! bête!* Oh, 'tis monsieur,” were the words which greeted Mr. Sterne as he entered the sloping-roofed attic, one side of which was almost entirely window—old lead-framed lattice, mended in every conceivable way with pasted paper and book-covers; and there, in the middle of the worn floor, stood the thin, sharp-faced woman of the cellar, holding in one hand a whip, in the other a hoop; while two half-shaven French poodle-dogs crouched at her feet. Seated by the open window, surrounded by bird-cages, conspicuous among which was that of the lark whose notes enlivened the court, was a tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed youth, eager-looking and well-featured, but sadly deformed, for his head seemed to rest upon his shoulders, and the leg twisted round the crutch which leaned against his chair was miserably attenuated.

“*Bon jour!* How are the pupils, Madame la Mère?” said the curate, taking a broken chair and seating himself.

“*Bête, bête, bête!*” hissed the woman, making feigned cuts with her little whip at the crouching dogs, which yelped miserably as they shrunk closer to the boards. “Ah, what you deserve!” she said.

“And how are the birds, Jean?” addressing the young man, who was looking at him half-askance. “Your lark gives me the heartache, and sets me longing for the bright country.”

The curate had touched the right chord, for the youth's face brightened into a pleasant smile directly.

“Does he not sing!” he said, with a slight French accent; and he leaned towards the cage where the bird, with crest erect, was breasting the wooden bars, and gazing with bright bead-like eyes up at the blue sky; but as soon as the cripple's finger was inserted between the bars, the bird pecked at it playfully, fluttered its wings, and then, with head on one side, stood looking keenly at its master.

“Oh, yes, he sings,” hissed the woman; “but he is obstinate, is Jean. He should sell his bird, and make money, and not let his poor *mère* always keep him.”

“Pst, pst!” ejaculated Jean, frowning upon his

mother ; but she only stamped one foot angrily, and continued—

"He is *bête* and obstinate. The doll downstairs with the needle-machine loves the bird, and she would buy it, and it is worth four shillings ; but Jean will that his mother seek his bread for him in de street, wis de stupid dogs ; and they are *bête*, and will not learn nosing at all. *Allez donc !*"

As the woman grew more voluble in her speech, she passed from tolerable English to words with a broader and broader accent, till the command given at last to the dogs, each word being accompanied by a sharp cut of the whip, when the animals rose upon their hind-legs, drooped their fore-paws, and then subsided once more into their natural posture, but now to bend their fore-legs, as if kneeling. Then they rose again, drooped, and afterwards meekly crossed their paws, winking their eyes dolefully the while, and, with an aspect of gravity made absurd, walked slowly off to separate corners of the room, where they again went down upon all-fours, and then sat wistfully winking at and watching their task-mistress.

"See, then !" she exclaimed, in her harsh, shrill voice. "They would not do it, though I try thousand times ; but now the task is ended they walk. Ah-h-h !"

The cut in the air which accompanied the exclamation might have fallen upon the dogs themselves, for the miserable little objects yelped as they saw it fall, and, as if moved by one muscle, laid their heads against the whitewashed wall till, seeing themselves unnoticed, they curled up, but never for a moment took their blinking eyes off their mistress.

Amidst much muttering, and with many frowns and short, sharp shakes of the head, while her lips were pressed closely together, the woman, after much fumbling in her pocket, drew forth a partly-knitted stocking ; when, sitting down, she began furiously clicking her needles, watching the while, with half-closed eyes, the curate and her son.

"So, then, you will not sell your lark, Jean?" said Mr. Sterne.

The cripple knitted his brow slightly, shook his head, and then drawing a long, delicate, girlish finger over the bars of his favourite's cage, the lark set up its crest, twittered, fluttered its wings, and again pecked at the finger.

"No, no, no," he said, softly ; "why does she complain? I would work if I could ; but I sell and make money of these, though it seems cruel to keep them shut up, and they beat themselves against their prison-bars to get out into the free air and the green woods. And I'm sorry for them when the little breasts grow bare, and the feathers lie in the bottom of the cage ; and she says—*ma mère* there—that I am *bête*."

The woman seemed to compress every feature, as she shook her head fiercely, and went on with her knitting.

"Look !" continued Jean, softly, as he smiled and pointed rapidly from cage to cage—"canaries, linnets, redpoles, goldfinches, and a blackbird. The thrush broke his heart with singing, they said—the birdcatchers—but it was not that : I know why. I

have sold four birds this week ; but I keep the lark—he is a favourite."

"Bah !" ejaculated the mother, softly ; "but he is *bête*," when, as the curate turned, she was bending over her knitting, shaking her head and frowning, while she stabbed fiercely again and again at the worsted ball, till it was transfixed by her needle, when she replaced the ball in her pocket, where the first drag she gave at the thread drew the ball from its place, and it rolled on the floor. "Ah ! good dog, *bon chien !*" she cried, as one of the poodles ran forward, caught the errant ball, and bore it to its mistress, returning immediately to his corner, but not to be unrewarded ; for the woman rose, and forcing up the sliding socket, caused a little scrap of tallow candle-end to shoot out of a tin candlestick as from a gun, when, receiving permission, the dog snatched it from the floor, and devoured the savoury morsel in its corner.

"But he should sell the lark, monsieur," said the woman.

"Hush, *ma mère*," said the cripple, angrily ; "the bird is not to sell."

The mother shrugged her shoulders, and clicked her needles furiously.

"We all have our loves and likes, madame," said the curate, quietly.

"Oh, yes, yes—you rich. But we poor? No. We must live, and eat, and drink, and have clothes ; and Jean there has ruined me in medicine. What do we want with favourites, we poor? But that they help to keep us, I would sell the dogs. We are all slaves here, we poor ; and we sell ourselves, our work, our hands, our beauty, some of us—is it not so?—and you rich buy, or we starve. It is a bad world for us old and ugly. I am not like the doll upon the floor downstairs."

A sharp, angry glance passed between mother and son, as the former rose from her seat, and with a short, quick step left the room, driving back the dogs as they tried to follow ; while it was evident that her words jarred painfully upon the curate. "Our beauty, some of us," seemed to ring in his ears again and again, and he could not help associating these words with the latter part of her speech.

"How do you get your birds, Jean?" said the curate, making an effort, and breaking the silence.

"From him," said the young man, nodding across the court to where Bill Jarker sat half out of his trap-door, still keeping up his pigeons, for a stray was in sight, and he was in hopes of an amalgamation, in spite of the efforts being made by neighbouring flights. "From him : he goes into the country with his nets—far off, where the green trees wave, while I can only read of them. But the book ; did you bring the book?"

Thinking of other birds breasting their prison-bars : now of the fair bright face that he had seen at the window below, now of that of the cripple before him, the curate produced a volume from his pocket, and smiled as he watched the glittering eyes and eager aspect of the young man, as, hastily grasping the volume, he gazed with avidity upon the title.

"You love reading, then, Jean?" said the curate.

"Yes, yes," cried the cripple. "What could I do

without it? Always here; for I cannot walk much—only about the room. Ah, no! I could not live without reading—and my birds. She is good and kind," he continued, nodding towards the door; "but we are poor, and it makes her angry and jealous."

The lark burst forth with one of its sweetest strains as it heard its master's voice, and then, rising, the curate left the attic, closing the door after him slowly, and peering through the narrowing slit, to look upon the cripple eagerly devouring a page of the work he had brought.

The Frenchwoman was upon the first landing, and saluted the curate with a sinister, meaning smile as he passed her and thoughtfully descended.

"But he is mean, I tell you!" cried *ma mère*, angrily, as she once more stood beside her son. "What does he give us but words—words which are worth nothing? But what is that? My faith, a book he brought you? You shall not read; it makes you silly, and to forget your mother, who does so much for you. But I will!"

"Ah!" cried Jean, painfully starting from his seat, and snatching back the volume; and just in time, for the next moment would have seen it flying from the open window.

"Then I will sell the lark when you are asleep," cried the woman, spitefully.

The youth's eyes glittered, as, with an angry look, he hissed between his teeth, "Then I will kill the dogs!" But the anger passed from his countenance in a few moments, and smiling softly, he said, "No, no, *ma mère*—you would not sell my poor bird, because I love it, and it would hurt me."

And then, casting down her knitting, the woman sprang across the room, throwing her arms round the cripple, and kissing him passionately, calling him by every endearing name, as she parted the air from his broad forehead, and gazed in his bright dark eyes with all a mother's fondness.

But the curate heard nothing of this—nothing but the loud song of the lark, which rang through the house—as slowly and thoughtfully he descended the worn and creaking stairs, while the woman's words seemed to keep repeating themselves in a slow, measured way, vibrating in his ears, and troubling him sorely with their cutting meaning; and more than once he found himself forming with his lips, "Our beauty, some of us."

CHAPTER XXV.—SHADES.

THE lark was silent once more; and now from the open door of the first-floor, rising and falling, with a loud and rapid "click, click, click," came the sound of Lucy Grey's sewing machine—"click, click," the sharp pulsations of the little throbbing engine, whose needle darted in and out of the soft material held beneath it by those white fingers. But as one of the stairs gave a louder crack than ordinary, the machine stopped, and the quiet, earnest, watching face of Lucy Grey appeared at the door, which she now held open, bowing with a naive grace in answer to the curate's salutation.

"My mother wished me to watch that you did not go down without seeing her to-day," said Lucy, apologetically; for Mrs. Hardon was far from well

that week, and, since the long discussion that morning between old Matt and Septimus, she had been bemoaning her lot in a weak, spiritless way, till, finding all his attempts at consolation of no effect, Septimus had taken his hat and gone out for a walk with his boy. To-day Mrs. Septimus would be tolerably well; to-morrow, in a weak fit, exacting sympathy from husband and child in a way that would have wearied less loving natures. Now she would refuse food, upon the plea that it could not be afforded for her; consolation, because she was a wretched, miserable burden; and medicine, because she was sure that it would do her no good.

"Be patient with her, my darling," Septimus would say to Lucy—a needless request. "Think of the troubles she has gone through, and then look at me."

"What for?" Lucy would cry, laughingly imprisoning him by seizing his scrubby bits of whisker in her little fingers, and; then kissing him on either cheek—"what for? To see the dearest father that ever lived?"

And then memories of the past would float through Septimus Hardon's brain, as he smoothed down the soft braided hair about the girl's white forehead. But there were tearful eyes above the smiling lips, and Septimus Hardon's voice used to tremble a little as he said—

"God bless you, my darling!"

"Our beauty, some of us," seemed vibrating in the curate's ears as Lucy spoke; but the bright look of welcome, the maidenly reserve, and sweet air of innocence emanating from the fair girl before him, seemed to waft away the words, and, returning to the present, he followed her to where Mrs. Hardon was lying down. Drawing a chair to the bedside, he seated himself, to listen patiently to the querulous complaints he had so often heard before—murmurings which often brought a hot flush to Lucy's cheek as she listened, until reassured by the quiet smile of the curate—a look which told her how well he read her mother's heart, and pitied her for the long sufferings she had endured—sickness and sorrow—which had somewhat warped a fond and loving disposition.

Perhaps it was unmaidenly, perhaps wrong in the giver and taker, but, seated at her sewing machine in the next room, Lucy would watch through the open door for these looks, and treasure them up, never pausing to think that they might be the pioneers of a deeper understanding. She looked forward to his visits, and yet dreaded them, trembling when she heard his foot upon the stairs; and more than once she had timed her journeys to the warehouse so that they might take her away when he was likely to call; while often and often afterwards, long tearful hours of misery would be spent as she thought of the gap between them, and bent hopelessly over her sewing machine.

A long interview was Mr. Sterne's this day, for Mrs. Hardon was more than ordinarily miserable, and had informed him two or three times over that she was about to take to her bed for good.

"But it does not matter, sir; it's only for a little while, and then perhaps I shall be taken altogether.

I'm of no use here, only to be a burden to that poor girl and my husband. But for me and the different fancies I have, that poor child need not be always working her fingers to the bone. But she will grow tired of it, and Mr. Hardon's health will fail, and our bit of furniture will be seized; and I'm sure I'd rather die at once than that we should all be in the workhouse."

"But," said Mr. Sterne, smiling, "don't you think matters might just as likely take the other direction? See, now, if it does not come a brighter day to-morrow, with a little mental sunshine in return for resignation."

And he whispered the last few words.

Now, there was some truth in what Mrs. Septimus Hardon said; for had it not been for her liking for strange luxuries when her sick fits were on, Lucy need not have worked so hard. At other times Mrs. Hardon was self-denying to an excess; but when in bed, probably from the effort of complaining, her appetite increased to a terrible extent, and she found that she required sticks of larks roasted, fried soles, oysters, pickled salmon, or chicken, to keep her up, while port wine was indispensable. But if she had preferred ortolans to larks, game and truffles to chicken and oysters, if the money could have been obtained she would have had them. And many a day Septimus and Lucy dined off bread and cheese, and many a night went supperless to bed, that the invalid's fancies might be gratified.

The conversation went on, and Lucy at her work more than once raised her eyes; but when her mother's complaints were like the last, she bent her head, and the tears she could not restrain fell hot and fast upon the material before her.

"What have I to hope for?" moaned Mrs. Hardon, taking refuge in tears herself when she saw how Lucy was moved. "What have I to hope for?"

"Hope itself, Mrs. Hardon," said the curate, firmly. "You suffer from a diseased mind as well as from your bodily ailment; and could you but come with me for once, only during a day's visiting, I think you would afterwards bow your head in thankfulness, even for your lot in life, as compared with those of many you would see."

"Yes, yes, yes, I know," sobbed the poor woman; "but don't be angry with me. I know how weak and wicked I am to murmur, when they study me as they do; but when I am like this, and this weary time comes on, I am never satisfied. Don't—don't be angry with me."

Mrs. Hardon's sobs became so violent that Lucy hurried to the bed and took the weary head upon her breast.

Drawing his chair nearer to the bedside, the curate took the thin worn hand held out so deprecatingly to him.

"Hush!" he whispered.

And as he breathed words of tender sympathy that should awaken her faith, the mother looked earnestly on the sad smile on the speaker's face—a smile that mother and daughter had before now tried to interpret, as it came like balm to the murmuring woman, while to her child it spoke volumes; and as her own yearned, it seemed to see into the depths of their visitor's heart, where she read of

patience, long-suffering, and crushed and beaten-down hopes.

All at once a heavy step was heard upon the stairs, and Lucy started from her mother's side as a loud, rough voice called—

"Mrs. Hardon! Mrs. Hardon!"

But before she could reach the door of the other room, the handle rattled, and the curate could hear a man's step upon the floor.

"Hush!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardon—"it must be a letter."

And involuntarily, as he rose from his chair to leave, the curate had to stand and listen, gazing upon Lucy, who stood in the middle of the next room, now flooded with light from the sunshine which streamed through staircase window and open door; and he could not but mark the timid face of the girl as she stood wrapped as it were in the warm glow.

But it was no letter, only Mr. William Jarker, who, invisible from where the curate stood, was telling Lucy, in familiar, easy tones, that his "missus wanted to see the parson afore he went."

As Mr. Sterne stepped forward, and saw the ruffian's leering look and manner, and the familiar, sneering smile upon his coarse lips, he shivered and turned paler than was his wont, before knitting his brows angrily; while, troubled and confused, Lucy looked from one to the other, as if expecting Mr. Sterne should speak.

But the look made no impression upon Mr. Jarker, who directed a half-laugh at Lucy, and then, nodding surlily towards the curate, he turned, and directly after there came the sounds of his heavy descending steps as he went down, leaving the room impregnated with the odour of the bad tobacco he had been smoking.

"Our beauty, some of us," rang in the curate's ears once more, and like a flash came the recollection of the meeting he had witnessed in the street. His mind was in a whirl with thoughts that he could not analyze; while as his eyes met those of Lucy, the girl stood with face aflame, trembling before him—looks that might have meant indignation or shame, as, with the smile still upon his lip, but so altered, the curate turned to go; but he stopped for a moment at the door, where, out of sight of Mrs. Hardon, he could again confront the shrinking girl with a long inquiring gaze; but trembling, agitated, with lips void of utterance, though parted as if to speak, Lucy stood back, her eyes now cast down; and when she raised them once again, he was gone.

Then, with the colour slowly fading, to leave her face ashy pale, Lucy stood with outstretched hands, gazing at the closed door. Something seemed rising in her throat which she tried to force back, and it was only by an effort that she kept from crying out, as, falling upon her knees by a chair, she buried her face in her hands, choking down the sobs, lest her mother should hear; though she, poor woman, slowly turned her face to the wall, ignorant of her child's suffering, and slept.

And now again came ringing down the sweet, clear trill of Jean's lark, till, worn out with the impetuosity of her grief, the poor girl raised her head,

smoothened back her dark hair, and, half-sitting, half-kneeling, listened to the strain.

The song ceased as suddenly as it had commenced, and the void was filled by a long, loud whistling; when, with lips set firm, and angry countenance, Lucy rose and stepped lightly across the room to her sewing machine by the open window, where, raising her eyes, she could see Mr. Jarker, pipe in hand, presenting himself once more as a half-length study, as he whistled and cheered on his flight of pigeons, which sailed round and round, till the whirring and flapping of their wings brought up early days of her childhood, and Lucy seemed to gaze upon some half-forgotten woodland scene in the country, with ring-necked stockdoves crowding on a bending branch after their return from flight.

But no such visions floated before the mind's eye of Mr. Jarker, for his pipe was out; so, ceasing his whistle, he proceeded to ignite a match upon the blackened pipe-bowl, screening the tiny flame between his hands till the tobacco was in a glow—all the while in happy oblivion of a pair of indignant flashing eyes that rested upon him till their brightness was once more dimmed by tears. Heedless, too, was Mr. Jarker of the strange, sardonic leer directed at him from the attic-window opposite his own, where *ma mère*, with her dim grey eyes, glanced at him from time to time as she busily knitted, or stabbed her ball of worsted; for Mr. Jarker was evidently interested in what was taking place beneath him, as he glanced through his trap from time to time. And now once more, with rapid beat, rose the "click, click, click," of Lucy's sewing machine, as, flashing in and out of the fine material, the needle laid in its chain-like stitches; but Lucy Grey's finely-stitched lines were far from even that afternoon.

CHAPTER XXVI.—WITH MRS. JARKER.

ALWAYS at the call of the poor of his district, the Reverend Arthur Sterne sighed as, slowly descending towards the court, he tried to drive away the words that seemed to ring in his ears; but in vain, for the next moment he was muttering them once more; and the thought came upon him that, for many months past, he had been gazing at the Hardon family through a pleasant medium—a softening mist, glowing with bright colours, but now swept away by one rude blast, so that he looked upon this scene of life in all its rugged truthfulness. He told himself that the mist had once opened to afford him a glimpse, while again and again he smiled at the folly which had led him to expect romance in a London court. The pleasant outlines and softened distance, toned down by the light mists, were gone now, and he gazed upon nothing but the cold, bare reality. It was strange; but he did not ask himself whether the bitter blast might not have brought with it some murky, distorted cloud, whose shade had been cast athwart the picture upon which, he now woke to the fact, he had dearly loved to gaze.

Still muttering to himself, the curate slowly went down step by step.

"So young, so pure-looking! But who could

wonder, living in this atmosphere of misery? But what is it to me?" he cried, angrily.

For strange thoughts and fancies came upon him, and his mind was whispering of a wild tale. The thoughts of the past, too, came—of the happy days when, in early manhood, he had loved one as fair and bright—one whom another bridegroom had claimed, as having been betrothed to him from her birth. The cold earth had been her nuptial bed, and he, the lover, became the gloomy, retired student until his appointment to a city curacy, and the devotion of his life to the sorrows of the poor. But again he bit his lip angrily, at making the comparison between the dead and the living. What connection was there between them, and of what had he been dreaming? What, indeed! After years upon years of floating down life's stream—a calm and sad, but placid journey, unruffled but by the sorrows of others—he now awoke to the fact that unwittingly he had halted by a pleasant spot, where he had been loitering and dreaming of something undefined—something fraught with memories of the past; and now he had been rudely awakened and recalled to the duties he had chosen.

He passed into the court, and stood for a few moments gazing at where there was a cellar opened, with half a score of children collected to drop themselves or their toys down; while, being a fresh arrival upon the scene, a cluster of the little ones began to get beneath his feet, and run against him, or give themselves that pleasant cramp known as "a crick in the neck," by staring up in his face; but he freed himself from his visitors by hastily entering the opposite house.

More than one door was opened and more than one head thrust out as Mr. Sterne ascended the staircase; but in every instance there was a smile and a rude curtsy to greet him, for he had that happy way of visiting learned by so few, and his visits always seemed welcome. Those who, moved by curiosity, appeared, were ladies, who directly after became exceedingly anxious concerning their personal appearance. Aprons, where they were worn, were carefully stroked down; hair was smoothed or made less rough; sundry modest ideas seemed to rise respecting a too great freedom of habit where a junior was partaking of nourishment; but everywhere the curate met with cordial glances, till he once more stood in front of an attic, and entered.

Mr. Sterne had so far only encountered females; for "the master" of the several establishments was out at work, or down in the country after the birds, or at the corner of some street where there was a public-house, at whose door he slouched, in the feeble anticipation that work would come there to find him, or that the landlord or a passing friend would invite him to have "a drain."

But Mr. William Jarker was, as has been seen, at home, though, with the exception of his legs, invisible; for he was among his pigeons, emulating the chimneys around by the rate at which he smoked—chimneys smoking here the year round, since in most cases one room formed the mansion of a family.

But Mr. Sterne had not come to see Jarker, but

at the summons of his wife, in whom some eighteen months had wrought a terrible change. She sat wrapped in an old shawl, shivering beside the few cinders burning in the rusty grate—shivering though burned up with fever, the two or three large, half filled bottles of dispensary medicine telling of a long and weary illness. The wide windows admitted ample light, but only seemed to make more repulsive the poverty-stricken place, with its worn, rush-bottomed chairs; rickety table, upon which stood the fragments of the last meal; the stump bedstead, with its patched patchwork counterpane; the heaped-up ashes beneath the grate; the battered and blackened quart-pot from the neighbouring public-house standing upon the hob to do duty as saucepan; while here and there stood in corners the stakes and nets used by Mr. Jarker in his profession of birdcatcher. A few cages of call-birds hung against the wall; but Mr. Jarker's custom was, when he had captured feathered prey, to dispose of it immediately—pigeons being his "fancy."

A sad smile lit up the woman's face as the curate entered—a face once, doubtless, pleasing, but now hollow, yellow, and ghastly; where hung out flauntingly were the bright colours which told of the enemy that held full sway in the citadel of life.

"I knew you would come, sir," she whispered, letting her thin white fingers play amongst the golden curls of a little head, but half-concealed in her lap, where one bright round eye was peeping timidly out to watch the stranger; and then, as the curate took one of the broken chairs and sat beside the sick woman, whenever she spoke it was in a whisper, and with many a timid glance at the ladder and open trap in the roof, where her master stood, as though she feared to call down punishment upon her head—"I knew you would come; and Bill was easy to-day, and come and fetched you, though he came back and said you were busy, and would not stop."

"Look alive, there, and get that over?" cried Mr. Jarker from the trap. "I aint a-goin' to stand here all day."

And by way of giving effect, or for emphasis, this remark was accompanied by a kick at the ladder, and a shake of the trap. Then followed an interval of peace, during which the presence of the domestic tyrant was made known only by the fumes of his tobacco, which floated down into the room, and made the poor woman cough terribly.

Once Mr. Sterne was about to tell the fellow to cease, but the look of horror in the woman's face, and the supplicating joining of her hands, made him pause, for he knew that he would be but adding to her suffering when his back was turned. The open trap seemed to act as a sort of retiring-room for Mr. Jarker when any one was in the attic that he did not wish to see; but every now and then during the earnest conversation with the suffering woman, there came a kick and a growl, and a shake of the ladder, which made Mr. Sterne frown, and the poor woman start as if in dread. And so, during the remainder of the curate's stay, the consolatory words he uttered were again and again interrupted; while at last the voice came growling down as if in answer to a statement Mrs. Jarker had just made—

"Don't you tell no lies, now, come, or I shall make it hot for yer!"

When, in the involuntary shudder the woman gave, there was plainly enough written for the curate's reading the long and cruel records of how "hot" for her it had often been made.

And now the importunities of the child by her knee aroused the poor woman to a forgetfulness of self in motherly cares, when the curate took his leave, but in nowise hurried by the savage shake that Jarker gave to the ladder—a shake which brought down a few scraps of plaster, to fall upon the cages and make the songsters flutter timidly against their prison-bars.

Half-way down the stairs Mr. Sterne encountered the woman with whom he had seen Lucy in the Lane; the woman he presumed to be the mother of the child Mrs. Jarker had now for some time nursed.

For a moment he stopped, as if to speak; but he remembered the next instant that he had no right to question her, and he stood gazing sternly at her, while, as she shrank back into a corner of the landing, her look was keen and defiant—the look of the hunted at bay. Once he had followed her for some distance, and then, perhaps, he would have spoken; but now the desire seemed gone, and linked together in his mind were Lucy, *ma mère*, the ruffian he had left upstairs, and this woman.

"But what is it to me?" he thought bitterly.

And, hurrying down the stairs, he stood for a moment at the doorway, heedless of the children scampering over the broken pavement—heedless that, with hot eyes and fevered cheeks, Lucy had left her sewing machine and stepped back from the window, that she should neither see nor be seen—heedless of all around; for his thoughts were a strange medley—pride, duty, and passion seeking to lead him by different roads. Then for a while he remembered the poor woman he had left, whose leave-taking he felt was near—a parting that he could not but feel would be a happy release from sorrow and suffering.

At last, turning to go, he cast his eyes towards the open window that Lucy had so lately left, when, with knitted brow and care gnawing at his heart, he passed out into the street, and walked towards his lodgings; but even there, in the midst of the busy throng, where the deafening hum of the traffic of the great city was ever rising and falling, now swelling into a roar, and again sinking to the hurried buzz of the busy workers, ever rang in his ears the bitter words of the old Frenchwoman—"Our beauty, some of us!"

NEW SOURCE OF GUANO.—The American minister for agriculture has recently stated that in the extensive caverns of Texas enormous masses of guano are deposited. The quantity is estimated at twenty thousand tons, and the quality is said to be superior to that of fish guano. Its origin must be looked for in the immense numbers of bats which inhabit these caverns. It is also reported that in the Indian Ocean several guano islands have been discovered, so that the threatened exhaustion of guano deposits need not be feared for some time to come.—*Nature*.

Infernal Machines.

SOME time has now elapsed since the horrible Bremerhaven explosion, but it may not be out of place to draw attention to the fact that it is still probable that time and money continue to be expended, and talent wasted and misapplied, in devising the most refined methods of executing the most dastardly and diabolical designs. Mechanical skill appears to be laid under special contribution in these matters, although it can scarcely be doubted that those whose skilful hands contrive these cunning devices are perfectly innocent of the intended application of their handiwork.

As far as we at present know, he whose wasted life closed by a pistol bullet at Bremerhaven employed an apparatus consisting of a hammer which was to strike a blow on some explosive substance at the end of a predetermined time, and which hammer was actuated by clockwork. No precise description of the machine has as yet been given. It is, however, by no means improbable that the mechanical arrangement will prove to be very much like one which was designed for a similar dastardly purpose nearly three years since.

As stated in the letter of a correspondent, there was at one time a conspiracy to ship a quantity of highly insured but worthless goods on board one of the Messageries Maritimes Company's vessels either at Bordeaux or Marseilles. With the goods was to be shipped an infernal machine, which, at a given time, was to explode, cause the destruction of the ship, and bring the conspirators their miserable reward. This machine consisted of a chest containing a powerful explosive compound and an exploding apparatus. The principle of the exploder was that of the needle-gun—a needle being driven into a primed cartridge, and causing the explosion of the whole mass of the compound.

The mechanism consisted of a needle or striker, set in a bolt, at the other end of which was a spiral spring held in a tube. When the bolt was forced back into the tube there was, of course, a powerful pressure behind it tending to push it outwards and to drive the needle into the cartridge. In order to hold the bolt back until the proper moment for the discharge had arrived, a catch or stud was formed on it, which was made to engage with a horizontal lever, having a hammer-shaped head. The lever was connected with springs so arranged as to have a constant tendency to release its head from the catch. This tendency, however, was counteracted by a broad disc of metal which, being placed close against the lower part of the lever head, held it in its place in front of the catch on the needle bolt. In the disc was cut a notch sufficiently deep to allow the lever head to drop into it when that part of the disc was presented to it, and so to release the needle bolt. The disc was revolved by a train of clockwork so speeded as that the disc should travel a given distance in a definite time. The edge of the disc was marked with a number of spaces, one space representing a day, and the edge would travel through that space in one day. Assuming the disc to be marked into ten portions, and the machine to be required to explode in eight days, the lever would

be set at the eighth mark from the notch. The clockwork would then be started, and the disc would revolve until, at the end of the eighth day, the notch would arrive at the lever head which would be forced into the notch by its springs. The needle bolt would thus be released, and, being impelled sharply forwards by the powerful spiral spring at its rear, would cause the explosion of the cartridge, and so of the whole mass of the explosive compound. Thus would be consummated a catastrophe from which it is probable no living soul would escape to record it.

It is by no means certain that the miscreant Thomas was connected with the conspiracy in which this infernal machine was to have been used, although circumstances favoured the supposition that he was. If he was, the publicity given to the matter at the time, and the fact of the mechanism of the machine having become known, would probably cause him to substitute a hammer falling on an explosive substance for a needle penetrating a cartridge. And the matter would be by no means difficult; for, after all, what we have described is little more than a needle-gun lock released by clockwork instead of by hand; and Thomas would only have to apply the principle of the percussion lock to his apparatus. This is what he probably did, as accounts tell us of the table broken by the force of the blow of the hammer when the machine was tried.

How the fatal explosion came about is not quite clear, and possibly it never will be made any clearer than it is at the present time. It is to be accounted for on either one of two hypotheses—it may have arisen from the premature release of the hammer, or striker, by reason of a derangement of the machinery, caused by a violent concussion such as a fall would produce, or it may have been due to the explosion of the destructive agent itself from the same cause. The latter hypothesis, however, opens up the question of the nature of the explosive—whether it was pure nitro-glycerine, or one of its compounds, lithofracteur or dynamite. If it was nitro-glycerine, and it had become crystallized, which will happen at a temperature of about 43° Fah., a very moderate concussion would be sufficient to explode it; if it was lithofracteur or dynamite, the same temperature would only harden it and render it more inert than when in its plastic condition.

This point was exemplified during some experiments carried out with lithofracteur in Wales before the War Office Committee on Explosives in February, 1872. There, upon igniting a sausage of lithofracteur with a capped fuse—the sausage being placed against a military stockade—only a portion of it exploded. A second attempt met with a similar result, while a third only caused the lithofracteur to take fire and burn. The cause of the inertness of the compound was the cold to which it had been exposed for some hours on a bleak hill top. This points to the conclusion that nitro-glycerine was the agent used, for it can hardly be supposed that proper care had not been taken to make the mechanism of the apparatus strong enough to resist the shocks to which transport would expose it. Moreover, the enormous and widespread mischief done appears to be greater than would have been

effected by the quantity of dynamite which the box—if the size be rightly stated—could contain, but not more than would be produced by that bulk of pure nitro-glycerine. Besides, either lithofracteur or dynamite could have been procured on the Continent without exciting suspicion, whereas nitro-glycerine could not. The latter article, however, is freely used in some parts of the United States, and can be readily procured. Circumstances seem to point to nitro-glycerine as the agent which caused such widespread desolation at Bremerhaven.

Other forms of infernal machines have been imported into the discussions which have arisen upon the Mosel catastrophe. Among these is the coal shell and the rat, of the latter of which there are two species. By the courtesy of the editor of *Iron*, we have recently had the opportunity of examining one of these coal shells, which came into his possession some two years and a half since. We are informed by him that, at the same time, two were sent as samples to a large colliery proprietor and coal shipper at Cardiff, who was offered any number.

It is to be borne in mind, however, that the Plimsoll question was being warmly agitated at that time; and it is assumed by some that these coal shells emanated from some unscrupulous upholder of the good cause Mr. Plimsoll has in hand, with a view of strengthening his case. The coal shell is a hollow brass casting, representing a small lump of coal, about 5 in. long by 3 in. wide, and 2 in. deep. At each end is a hole for clearing out the core of the casting and afterwards for filling it with the explosive compound.

The object of these shells would appear to be not so much the destruction of the ship by their direct as by their indirect use. They were probably intended to be thrown among the coal in the bunkers, and with it shovelled into the furnace of a steam vessel. There they would explode under the boiler, and would probably by such means cause the loss of the vessel. It is possible that the intention might have been to fill them with some material which would explode either after a certain time or at the high temperature sometimes present in coal cargoes. But the somewhat open offer of them to a coal shipper, in the circumstances, would appear to point to so very vague and aimless an end that the opinion that they were intended to promote the Plimsoll movement appears by no means unreasonable. The coal shells were evidently carefully moulded from a lump of coal, and when blacked readily deceive the eye.

The "rats"—of which there are two species—are of a more vicious nature. One species is intended to operate upon iron ships, the other upon wooden ones. The iron-ship rat consists of a block of iron known as "Keutledge," which has a hole bored into it, in which is placed a tubular boring tool containing an acid. On the top of the boring tool is a lever, with a weight at its outer end, and this lever can work to and fro horizontally in a space cut out of the top of the Keutledge. The lever is, of course, carefully boxed in, and the surface of the iron restored. A confederate is required, who will place the machine in the right position—that is, with the

bottom of the boring tool downwards and on the iron skin of the vessel. Being so placed, the rolling of the ship causes the lever to move backwards and forwards, and the end of the tool to cut into the ship's plates, the action being promoted by the acid and by a slight pressure given to the boring tool by a spring. The terrible process may be somewhat slow, but is very sure.

The wooden-ship rat is a more complex machine, and possibly more ingenious. It consists of a box, in which is placed a pair of vertical cylinders, one at each end of the box, and spaced about 5 feet apart. In the centre, between the two, is a horizontal cylinder, having a piston working in it, the rod passing through a stuffing box. The outer end of the piston rod works a ratchet drill or auger, the auger being weighted. The two vertical cylinders are each half filled with water, and communicate with the horizontal cylinder by pipes, each having its own pipe leading to the end of the horizontal cylinder nearest to it. The consequence is that as the ship rolls the water alternately quits and returns to the vertical cylinders, and, acting first on one side of the piston and then on the other, communicates a reciprocating motion to the piston rod. This motion is converted into a rotary motion at the weighted auger, and in time a hole is bored through the planking of the ship, which gradually fills, and may be lost before the seat of the leak is discovered. Provision is made for the release of the auger directly the hole has been bored and the resistance to it removed, when it silently drops through into the sea. Thus the hole is not plugged by the auger and the ends of villainy are defeated. Should the hole be discovered and the box be examined, there is nothing in it, except to a professional eye, to show how the hole was produced. Like the iron rat, the water rat requires a confederate to place it well for its deadly work.

A Kentucky Legend.

FAR up the Kentucky River, where the giant cliffs shoot perpendicularly upward from the water's edge for more than a thousand feet, where the stream, pent up between the granite walls, dashes downward with a speed equal to that of a mill-sluice, there is a peculiarly-shaped rock known as Harvey's Trap.

This rock is triangular, or nearly so, in shape, perfectly flat, some three or four feet in diameter, and lies directly in a narrow pathway that skirts the verge of the precipice, and gradually descends to the entrance of a large cavern that penetrates the face of a cliff a few feet from the surface. The venturesome pedestrian, after stepping over this rock, turns sharply to the left, almost at a right angle, and passing round the elbow, finds that he is treading upon a narrow ledge, scarcely twenty-four inches in width, the face of the cliff upon one hand, while upon the other yawns a frightful chasm, at the bottom of which—far, far below—he sees the flash of sunlight on the water as it hurries by.

Projecting above the verge of the precipice, directly in front of the rock we have described, there was, at the time of which we speak—and, indeed, until recently—a tall, slender hickory sap-

ling, that had taken root in the crevices of the rock, and which grew and thrived well, notwithstanding its precarious hold.

This much, by way of description, is necessary to the reader's full comprehension of what I am about to relate.

It was the evening, or rather afternoon, of the fourth day subsequent to the disastrous battle of the Blue Licks, about an hour before sunset, when the form of a man, clad in the garb of a hunter, cautiously emerged from a thicket a few paces in the rear of the cliff. Pausing an instant, as though to make sure he was unobserved, he uttered a low whistle, which quickly brought another individual to his side from out of the bush.

"Come to the cave," said the first—"this rock leaves no trail!"

And, so speaking, the two hunters bounded lightly across the open space, and disappeared through the narrow pathway that led to the cave below. The movements of the men were hasty, as though no time were to be lost in getting to cover; and not without ample reason. Scarcely had their heads sunk below the level of the rocks, when the undergrowth was again parted, and another form stole out as the others had done; but this time it was an Indian warrior, equipped and painted for the war-path.

A moment later he was joined by two others, and then the whole party, after a few words, spoken in deep, guttural tones, began a rapid search for the lost trail.

But, as the hunter had said, the hard surface of the cliffs gave no sign; and, closely scanning every inch as they went, the warriors moved gradually down the stream, and were soon lost to view.

Fully half an hour passed before the silence was again broken. At the expiration of that time, a head was cautiously protruded around the cliff where the path turned, and, a moment later, the hunter we have first seen stepped into full view, closely followed by his companion.

"I say, Buck," said the latter, in a low voice, "we've got to hurry up, or the reds 'll be down on us."

"Sartinly—sartinly!" was the reply. "Yer know that when Buck Harvey starts to do an Injin a turn he don't lag by the way. Come, reach out, an' see ef yer can draw the saplin' in."

It was evident that the fugitives had been concocting some plan while in the cavern, and that they were now putting it in operation. While the hunter was endeavouring to reach the branches of the hickory sapling, evidently with the intention of bending the elastic trunk in towards where they stood, Buck Harvey was busy with a coil of small though stout rope which he held in his hand. This he finally succeeded in getting free of kinks and tangles, and, after forming a loop of one end, he carefully laid it aside, and proceeded to assist his comrade in securing the tree.

Harvey now took from the pocket of his hunting-shirt a number of forked sticks, as large, perhaps, as a man's thumb, which he quickly drove into the crevices around the outer edge of the triangular rock we have heretofore described. Around these he then drew the noose he had formed in the rope,

made the outer end fast to the bent sapling, which was gradually eased up until all the strain was upon the cord, and the trap or "snare" was completed.

"Thar!" said the hunter; "ef one on 'em does get his foot into that, he'll see snakes, or my name aint Buck Harvey, that's all!"

With a last look, to see that all was secure, and after dropping a small piece of patching in the pathway between the trap and the edge of the cliff, both men again disappeared down the narrow ledge to the cave.

Several hours passed, and the full moon was just rising above the tree-tops on the hill beyond the river, when a slight sound from above caught the quick ear of Harvey.

"Hark, Ned!" he whispered to his comrade, who was dozing in one corner. "The imps are abroad, an' we'll hear from 'em soon."

Both men grasped their rifles and stole to the mouth of the cavern. Five, ten, twenty minutes passed, when suddenly a guttural exclamation, as of surprise, was heard.

"The rag, Ned!—they've found the——"

But the sentence was cut short by a stifled cry, quickly followed by a loud, shrill yell of dismay, and then, as the bent tree sprang back into its original position, they saw a dark form, with wildly flying arms, shoot outward, as though it had been hurled from some mighty engine of destruction.

A quick, sharp snap followed, as the rope, stretched to its utmost tension by the rebound, broke under the strain, and the hapless warrior, with a last yell of unspeakable horror, clove his way through the empty void down to the jagged rocks amid the torrent below. Without pausing to look further, the remaining warriors fled in terror to the forest, and were seen no more.

Buck Harvey has long since gone the way of all flesh; but the little triangular rock bears his name to this day.

The Electric Light.

FOR several nights past the attention of the public passing along the Strand has been arrested by a blaze of light overpowering the rays of the gas lamps, and affording a practical example of the value of the electric light as a means of illuminating an open space. Some half-dozen lamps suspended from the front of the Gaiety Theatre thus pour their lustre up and down the crowded thoroughfare, reducing the gas lamps for a considerable distance to an aspect of murkiness and gloom, which makes their presence appear almost ridiculous. The old oil lamps never looked so wretched when contrasted with the flame of gas as the gas lamps of the Strand when compelled to face the radiance of the electric light.

It is satisfactory to find that the light is receiving attention in sundry quarters where practical considerations will have peculiar weight. The Metropolitan Board of Works is alive to the importance of the question, and so is the Corporation of the City. Even the vestries are waking up on the subject, actuated by an inveterate feeling of hostility to the gas companies. The Metropolitan Board has

remitted the whole question of electric and gas illumination to its scientific staff, and we may hope to learn something from their labours ere long. The companies themselves are attending to the subject. The Chartered Company has the electric light on its own premises, and its officers are going thoroughly into the question for the purpose of settling the various details of cost and manipulation. It is a happy thing for the public that all hands are thus at work on the problem.

The friends of gas say that up to the present time there is nothing in the electric light which threatens to interfere with their prosperity. Still, they keep a keen eye on this infant Hercules, not knowing how soon their new competitor may become possessed of matured vigour, so as to be a powerful antagonist.

The fault of the electric light has been that of concentration. There has always been too much of it in one place. M. Jablochhoff startled the world by his ingenious method of dividing the electric current, an achievement quite as important as that by which he contrived to keep the carbon points at a uniform distance. M. Lontin promises to go farther. By the Lontin system, of which the Gaiety lights are an illustration, the electricity produced from one machine is distributed to several lamps, the lustre of each being brought down to that of one hundred full-power gas lights. Of course, we do not generally require to have one hundred gas lights all in one; but the Lontin light, as it appears in the Strand, is very bearable, and strongly resembles the magnesium light, having a bluish tint, which aggravates the yellow redness of the luckless gas lamps which are compelled to witness the triumph of their rival.

According to the figures given by Mr. Hollingshead, the Lontin light is *per se* much cheaper than gas. A street lit up on this principle would have a degree of light nearly twenty times greater than that furnished by gas, and the cost would only be increased fivefold. This, however, is not what we want. We require a light which shall be better than that which we now have, but which shall cost no more, or rather less. We do not want the light of two thousand lamps in the place of twenty. Mr. Hollingshead says that, "by reducing the number of lamps and making other alterations, the illuminating power and the cost could be reduced at the same time, until the difference between the cost of gas and electricity would be equalized, still leaving immense advantages on the side of electricity." The statements thus put forth are not altogether clear. The public would like to see the illuminating power of the gas increased, or the power of the electric light diminished. When we have got a bright, clean, practicable light, simply fed by an electric wire, then comes the question of cost; and if the cost be less than that of gas, there will speedily be a revolution in the mode of lighting our cities.

The electric light chiefly known to English visitors to Paris is the Jablochhoff candle, which displays its beautifully white glow from opalescent glass globes placed at a great height along the Avenue de l'Opéra, and among the trees of the Orangerie. There is, however, another electric light used in Paris by the Chemin de Fer l'Ouest,

for example, which has just adopted the Lontin system for lighting the Gare St. Lazare, the station at which the traveller by the Newhaven and Dieppe route enters the French capital.

So far as the illumination of open spaces, streets, and houses is concerned, the future, supposing gas to be to a certain extent superseded, appears to lie between the Lontin and the Jablochhoff light. The Siemens light has proved of great value for the purposes of lighthouses, where great intensity is desired. For ordinary uses, however, the problem is to moderate, not to increase, the intensity of the light. The Jablochhoff and Lontin lights have many points in common, and, as the former light is now very generally known, it is unnecessary to enter into all the details of this method of illumination. The points of importance in each are the generation of the electricity by a machine, the distribution of the current, and the supply and regulation of the "candles." To the Jablochhoff lights, the electrical force required is supplied by a gramme electrical machine.

The Lontin light is worked by a machine invented by M. Lontin himself. It produces at will a unique current or multiple currents, direct currents, and inverted currents. These can be distributed on several circuits. A great advantage in distribution is thus obtained. The machine produces several focuses of light, which can be entirely independent of one another. With a single machine, thirty-six lights have already been produced. The motive force employed to produce a light equal to 100 Carcel burners is half a horse power. A Carcel burner is a conventional measure, the standard of which is a Carcel lamp burning forty-two grammes of purified colza oil in an hour. The electric force, having been produced by the Lontin machine, is conducted towards the candles.

In 1813, Sir Humphry Davy took two hot coals, put them in contact, and made a voltaic current pass through them. He then slightly separated them, and saw between them a bow of fire, which he called the electric arc. The candles of the Jablochhoff and Lontin lights are sticks of carbon representing the coal used by Sir Humphry Davy. Mr. Jablochhoff employs kaolin in addition to carbon in a very ingenious manner, but the main superiority which the modern manufacturers of electric lights have over Sir Humphry Davy is in the superior economy with which electric force is now elicited. The carbons are vertically placed, one above the other, in the Lontin light as in that of M. Jablochhoff. The light comes not only from the electric arc between them, but also from the carbon candles themselves, which become incandescent and are consumed. A clock-work regulator advances them as they waste away; and it is stated that to such perfection has this contrivance been brought, that for a week or more the lights at the Gaiety have required no adjustment during the four hours for which they burn every night. Having once been set, the regulator has each night advanced the points without any aid from men.

At Paris little accidents are not unfrequent with the electric light. The Avenue de l'Opéra is occa-

sionally left in sudden darkness by some *contretemps*, and anything which renders this result unlikely to happen is, of course, an improvement. A Lontin light exhibited in experiments at the Paris Exhibition has remained luminous for twenty-one hours. The Lontin regulator and the Lontin machine are, it will have been seen, the speciality of this invention.

A Sea of Fire.

"IT is midnight, sir, and the horses are ready."

Hassan must have repeated these words at least a dozen times, in the same monotonous tone of voice, before they reached my understanding, for his voice had been somehow mixed up in my dreams for some time. I am a good sleeper; but at last the necessity of replying dawned upon me, and I sat up, yawned, and answered—

"Very well, Hassan; I will come directly."

He took his departure, but returned at the end of a few minutes, to make sure that I had not again succumbed to the influence of slumber. Seeing me nearly dressed, he salaamed and disappeared.

We were soon mounted, and on the road to Clollo, in the province of Constantine, Algiers—our horses evidently enjoying the cool night air and stepping out briskly. One is almost forced to travel by night in this country at that time of year, which was the month of August; and I shall always look back upon those rides through the wild scenery, with the deep, indigo-coloured sky above us, with a vivid recollection of the pleasure I then experienced. I have never seen other stars look so large and brilliant as those that hung over our heads in the north of Africa, on those many nights when I pursued my travels at hours when all the civilized world was sleeping, excepting a few foolish people who try to destroy their health by breathing the stifling air of crowded rooms till the witching hour has long been past.

August is the hottest month of the year in Algiers—in fact, the word hot seems but a mild term to apply to the blinding, scorching, withering glare of the sun at noonday; and no one who has not gasped through one of the hottest days in this country can comprehend the solemn, poetical, peaceful calmness of the small hours, with the cool air faintly fanning you as you are borne swiftly over the ground. My recollection of this night in particular is more vivid than of any other, because of the event which succeeded it. I remember noticing how, as the first rays of light shot up into the sky, everything woke into life and sound. The cries of numerous birds struck on my ear; small animals ran across the path; and the bushes rustled as they were stirred by the numerous living creatures coming out of their nests and holes in the ground.

As soon as the sun was up, I began to think it time to take shelter somewhere until the worst of the heat was over, and on my saying something to that effect to my guide, he informed me that we should very soon be at Fouser-el-Khange, where I could remain as long as I pleased. The heat, however, was overpowering before we reached the charming little place of that name, and I was very glad to

get a roof between me and the sun, which is really dangerous to an Englishman for a great part of the day.

At three we started again, for the worst of the heat was over by that time, and we made the best of our way towards a well-known station, where I intended to get a night's lodging. I set up my tent in the court-yard, while Hassan went by himself to see what his gun could procure for dinner. He was back in half an hour with several of those large grey pigeons common there, which formed an excellent dinner. As soon almost as it was dark, I threw myself on to my bed thoroughly tired out, and was soon in a profound and dreamless slumber.

My sleep was roughly broken by Hassan, who shook me, instead of waiting as usual till the continued utterance of a few words close to my head roused me sufficiently to comprehend what he meant. I sprang up and followed him outside, when the sight that greeted my eyes completely dispelled my lingering sleepiness. The mountain before us was red, like a volcano; and the smoke from burning grass, brambles, wild olive, and other trees ascended in lurid columns to the sky.

"Let us be off," cried my guide; "and we shall be in time for the devil's sport."

Our horses were speedily saddled, and we were soon galloping over the uneven ground, in company with some dozen or more natives from Tamalons. After about three-quarters of an hour's hard riding, Hassan drew up suddenly.

"We have come far enough," he said to me.

And, following the example set by the others, I dismounted, and holding my gun in readiness, asked of my guide some explanation, but there was no time for it then. The glow from the distant fire lit up the dark bronzed faces of my companions, their eyes glittering with excitement, though they stood like statues. The next minute there was a rushing, inexplicable sound nearing us, which puzzled me at first, though the moment after I knew that it was caused by an immense number of animals flying from the fire. Hyænas, leopards, wild boars, chacals, and many other wild beasts in a state of terror, passed before us; snakes writhed through the grass, lizards crawled as fast their nature would permit; large birds hovered overhead, their frightened cries mingling with the distant fluttering roar of the flames and the "bang, bang," of our guns, which were discharged as fast as loaded, with the result that any amount of game fell, till my companions piled up a heap of victims to their pieces, giving vent to shouts of delight, that added even more to the wildness of the scene—one never to be forgotten.

I learned afterwards that there was a tradition of the country which says that, when the devil takes a fancy for some sport, he sets fire to the woods, and concealing himself not far off, strikes at the game which comes flying towards him.

Suddenly the cries of joy, proceeding from those who had followed my guide and myself, ceased, and, a terrible fear appeared in their faces. Hassan pointed towards the south, and the cause was plain enough. My heart stood still with horror. While we had been engrossed with the excitement of the sport, the fire had crept on till the ends of what had

been a half circle had met, and we were surrounded! A quick glance round showed us the extent of the danger. We were in the midst of a vast circle of fire which diminished in size each moment, and it was impossible to cross the glowing walls of our prison.

"Great heaven, what a fate!" I thought, as I cast my eyes on all sides for some means of escape; but in vain. Our horses shivered and snorted in the extremity of terror, and well they might. After that brief glance, I gave up hope, and made up my mind to die like a man, since there was no help for it, though my whole soul revolted at the thought of such a death as this. Hassan meanwhile galloped hither and thither, like a madman, before setting off suddenly in a southerly direction, when the thought flashed upon me that he was about to dash into the flames, and end the suspense, sooner than wait and see them gradually creeping towards us. But I was mistaken. He had seen something which suggested a means of avoiding this dreadful fate, and in a few minutes his voice came to us in a cry of joy, which made us spring to our saddles and follow him. He had discovered an immense mass of rock, hidden from us before by trees, which, being perfectly bare, must be inaccessible to the fire. We all climbed to its summit, and the hope of life re-animated me, as we and our horses stood on this little island of rock, and looked round upon the sea of fire spreading out for an immense distance on all sides.

There we remained for long hours of misery, such as even now makes me shudder while recalling it—the waves of fire all around, long tongues seeming to try and reach us, as they licked the base of the rock, and sent their hot breath up into our faces. I thought for a time that we had but escaped the flames to die by suffocation from the smoke; but though we felt nearly stifled, there was sufficient air to keep us conscious of the terrors of our position. The fire did not lessen in intensity till the fuel was exhausted, and consequently we were three whole days before we could attempt to cross the wilderness of hot cinders in the midst of which we were situated.

Our unfortunate horses had somehow contrived to exist on what little scraps of vegetation they could find in corners of the rock, and we, for our part, had lived on venison cooked in a way, probably, quite new. At last Hassan declared we might venture to leave our rock of safety, and we crossed the still smoking cindery waste, arriving once more on the green earth, inexpressibly thankful for our deliverance. My poor horse died afterwards from its feet having been burnt in crossing the hot ground, much to my regret; for it was a splendid animal, and deserved a better fate.

DISEASE AMONG MULES.—A serious disease has broken out among the mules and cattle in some parts of Greece. A swelling shows itself, more generally on the chest, and frequently in twelve or fourteen hours the animal dies, or it may linger two days. On opening the animal no cause can be found. In a village in Eubœa all the mules have died.

The Apiary.

AT the present time there is much to be done in the apiary, and the most important work demanding attention now is, undoubtedly, the harvesting of the honey which the bees have been storing up during the summer, now rapidly passing away.

With reference to the taking of honey, it may be said with advantage that the old barbarous practice of destroying the bees with brimstone, previous to the removal of the combs from the hive, ought not to be adopted. So much has been written against destroying the bees previous to taking the honey, that perhaps to many of our readers any allusion to it at the present moment may appear superfluous; but as yet the preservation of the bees is by no means general, and it is of the highest importance that the attention of the bee-keeper should be again and again directed to the all-important subject of saving the lives of the bees.

To many apiarians, especially those of the cottager class, it seems impossible to take the honey without first destroying the bees, and where they can see their way clear to do this, they are slow in understanding how the bees can be kept during the winter, after they have been deprived of their honey. As a matter of fact, the taking of the honey without destroying a single bee is, to those accustomed to handle bees, a comparatively easy task, and a very few words will suffice to show what can be done with the stocks, deprived of their stores of honey.

If the hives are of an ordinary degree of strength, the most satisfactory course to pursue will be to take the honey from one half the number, and to leave the other for stock, and to unite the occupants of the honey-hives, which will be thus rendered homeless, with the occupants of the stock-hives. As a matter of course, those hives which on examination are found to contain the finest honey should be taken up.

To drive the bees from a hive filled with comb, blow a few puffs of tobacco-smoke into the hive, and then turn it bottom upwards, and immediately turn an empty one over it, and wrap a cloth of some kind round the junction to prevent the escape of the bees. Then proceed to beat the sides of the bottom hive with the hands or pieces of wood, and in a very short time the bees will begin to leave the combs and run up into the empty hive, and in from fifteen to twenty minutes nearly if not quite all will have ascended, as indicated by the cessation of the buzzing noise, which is invariably made as the old quarters are being vacated.

The next step is to unite the stock in the empty hive with a stock in a full one. The full hive must be turned upside down, and have a rather liberal quantity of sugar and water, flavoured with mint or nutmeg, sprinkled over the comb, and in ten or fifteen minutes afterwards the bees in the empty hive must be shaken into it, and when this has been done, give a second sprinkling of the syrup, and place the hive upon the board. By feeding as here advised, there is very little risk of any fighting between the two colonies. As a matter of course, one of the queens must be destroyed before the two stocks are

united, and the evening, just before sunset, is the best time for accomplishing the work.

If all the hives are well filled, those in which it is intended to put additional stock may have a portion of the honey-comb removed previously; and in exceptionally favourable seasons, when the filling of the hives is accomplished by an early date, the whole of the honey may be taken, and the stocks be put into empty hives, two stocks in each, and the bees fed liberally with properly prepared food.

A Yankee Yarn.

THERE are many incidents connected with the early settlement of Kentucky that have not as yet been touched upon by the sketch-writer or the novelist; and the following adventure which we now give to the reader is one of those that have for so long a time lain buried.

Among those that regarded themselves as living within the confines of Boonesborough—though so far from the station that bore the name of its founder as to be almost entirely unprotected by it—was a settler, known among his friends and neighbours by the name of Dick Turner. He had built his cabin on the very outskirts of the settlements, and, with his wife and three children, had for two years lived in peace and quietness, unmolested by the savages that were at all times, in greater or less numbers, on the war-path. Their nearest neighbour was half a mile away down the river, out of sight and hearing; and had it not been for the smoke that every morning curled above the tree-tops, one would not have known, standing in the doorway of Dick Turner's cabin, but that his was the only settlement for miles around, for on every hand was the forest, unbroken and solemn as in the days before Daniel Boone led the first party of hardy adventurers over the Cumberland Mountains.

One afternoon, the last of August, as Dick was at work in his clearing—and as it chanced at a point as far from the cabin as was possible for him to be without being in the forest—he was startled by the sudden appearance of half a dozen Indians, hideous with war-paint, who surrounded him almost before he was aware of their presence, and before he could spring and grasp his rifle that he always carried into the field when at work. Startled by their sudden appearance, he made a motion towards it, but a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and its owner said, in broken English—

"White man, go with us."

"No," said Dick, looking him full in the face. "Can't do that; much work to do."

And he pointed at what he had been doing, and then cast a wistful glance at his rifle, that was now in the hand of one of the savages.

"Come," said the savage, who appeared to be the leader, as well as the only one that knew a word of English. "White man must go."

Dick glanced towards the cabin, and saw his wife standing in the doorway, apparently in great alarm at his situation. The savages saw her, and after a word or two between themselves, three of them started in that direction. Unperceived by his captors, Dick made a sign that his wife fortunately

understood, and she disappeared within, closing the door in such a manner that the savages failed to obtain admittance, as Dick saw to his great joy, when, after trying it for a few moments, they hastily returned and joined the others. Evidently small in point of numbers, they cared not to waste the time that would be necessary for a siege, so they had desisted from their efforts to make captives of the woman and children.

"Come," said the savage, laying his hand on his captive's shoulder.

And Dick, who had felt his heart rise that his loved ones were left behind, went almost cheerfully into the forest, in which the shadows of night were already beginning to gather, casting only one backward glance at his home, to wonder when he would see it again. Then he resolutely put his face forward for the fate the future had in store for him. That future might be a long captivity, or it might be death; yet, as he walked amid his captors, and the shadows grew deeper about him, a hope was in his heart that he might escape, perhaps before the sun should rise on the morrow.

That night was a long and weary one to the settler. Evidently they cared not to be so near to the settlement, or else they feared pursuit, and they stopped not for rest or food until the sun was an hour high the next day. Then, as if feeling secure, they made a long halt, built a fire, and one of the number shooting a deer, they cooked it and made a plentiful repast.

Thus far the savages had used him well, only taking the precaution to fasten his hands behind his back in such a manner that he found it impossible to use them in the least, although they had taken care that the thongs should not cut into the flesh so as to be rendered painful. They had been very considerate of his comfort; and he determined, by appearing as cheerful as possible, to do away from their minds any thoughts that they might have of his unwillingness to accompany them, so that his chances of escape might be better than if their suspicions were constantly on the alert.

In this manner the day passed, and with the first shades of evening they made preparation to encamp. A fire was built—as they seemed to consider themselves so far from the settlements that they need fear no danger from the whites—and a couple of the party soon brought in game enough to afford them a generous supper. This cooked and partaken of, they all lay down to rest—Dick with a savage on either side of him, so close that he could not stir without their being aware of the motion; and, as an extra precaution, they had bound his feet together as tightly as his wrists, and the prisoner's heart began to sink within him as it had not done before, for he saw no possible chance of escape offered to him.

A couple of hours passed, and still Dick had not closed his eyes. One after another of the savages dropped off, as he knew by their hard, regular breathing, until at last he knew that he was the only one of the group who was not asleep. Oh! if his hands were only free, how soon he would be at liberty again!

He pulled upon the thongs with all his power,

until they cut deep into the flesh, like the keen edge of a knife; and at last, to his great joy, he found that the knot that held his left hand had slipped a little. Another strain, and it moved a little farther, and with another it was parted so far asunder that he pulled his hand through.

The savage lying on the left side of him moved, and he lay perfectly motionless, almost holding his breath, with his hand under him, in the same position as when confined, but the Indian only stretched himself a little, and then was off to sleep again. Dick now went to work to free his other hand; but the knot was drawn so hard that, even with the help of the other, he found it impossible to do so. He remembered his pocket-knife, and that he had given it to his boy to play with upon going out to work, the afternoon of his captivity. If he had it now, how quickly he would be a free man!

The moon had risen, and was shining down through the branches of the trees, and he saw its rays glittering on the blade of a knife in the belt of the savage who had so recently moved. It was a desperate undertaking, but his situation required desperate measures. With the utmost caution he stretched out his liberated hand, and slowly drew the knife from its resting place. The Indian never stirred, and his deep breathing told Dick that he was sleeping soundly. A moment more, and he was lying with the cords cut from his limbs, with none of the savages wiser for his motions.

Now came the most difficult part of the operation: to rise to his feet and get beyond the confines of the camp-fire without awaking any of his captors.

But Dick proved equal to the emergency. Slowly, and with the utmost caution, he rose upon his hands and knees. The snapping of a twig would betray him to the watchful ears about him. On his feet at last, he stepped over the sleeping savage whose knife he held in his hand, and slowly approached the Indian by whose side his rifle was lying. That he did not mean to leave behind, as he would need it for his own protection, and to procure food with, before he would regain the settlement. Stooping down, his hand was upon it, when the savage, awakened by the slight motion he made, essayed to spring to his feet. That action cost him his life, for Dick plunged into his breast the knife he still held in his hand, and the savage fell back with a deep groan.

All caution now was needless, for every savage was awakened, and, snatching up his rifle, Dick sprang out into the forest, followed by a war-whoop from the lips of every redskin.

A moment only was required to show them the situation, and to shake off the sleep that hung heavily on their eyelids. They saw their dead comrade on the ground, and caught a glimpse of their prisoner as he sprang away. Then, with another fierce war-whoop breaking from their throats, they started in pursuit.

Dick's blood ran cold as he heard the shouts that rang through the forest, and well he knew that if he again fell into their hands he need expect no mercy, for they would avenge the death of their comrade by the most fiendish of tortures. With only a few paces the start, he knew he had not much chance of es-

cape; but, slight as it was, he determined to make the best possible use of it.

For half a mile about the same distance was kept between them, and then, in spite of all his efforts, they gained upon him; and he knew that in a few minutes more he would be in their power, unless he could manage to deceive them in some manner and get them on another track. There was little hope of his doing this, yet it was his only chance; and he looked about for an opportunity to put it into execution.

The part of the forest he was now in was very dense, so that only a few straggling moonbeams found their way here and there through the tree-tops. No Indian was as yet in sight, though they were scattered on every side through the forest, trusting more to the sense of hearing than to following the trail made. A large tree lay on the ground before him, and as he passed the butt he saw there was a cavity sufficiently large for him to force his body into it. Here was the hiding-place he sought, and he at once availed himself of it. Placing his rifle in before him, he forced his way in for a distance of perhaps twenty feet, where he lay perfectly quiet, though almost afraid that the beating of his heart would betray him to his enemies.

Hardly was he safely ensconced, when he heard the footsteps of the Indians as they hurried by, and in a few moments they had died away, and, for the first time since he had plunged the knife into the breast of the savage, he experienced a sensation of relief. Still, he knew that he could remain where he was but a few moments, until assured that they had all passed by; for ere long they would discover their mistake and return to look for his trail. He must emerge; and by striking out in an opposite direction from that he had been pursuing, he hoped to elude pursuit.

Five, ten minutes passed, and Dick was on the point of emerging from his hiding-place, when he was startled by the sound of a footstep above his head. An Indian was walking along the log towards the butt, and he could hardly fail to see the cavity, and the signs he had made in forcing an entrance to his hiding-place, and the settler again gave way to despair, which was augmented a moment after, as the savage gave a loud whoop to call his companions. Then he knew too well that his retreat was discovered; but he lay perfectly quiet, hoping against his better judgment that he might yet escape.

In a few moments he knew by the sound of feet that the savages were all together, and he heard a consultation, not one word of which he could understand; but he was not long left in suspense as to what they had agreed upon. He heard some at work at the entrance of the log, while others were heaping brush above him; and he knew by this that his hiding-place was discovered, and that he was to be burnt alive inside the log. To describe the terrible agony that convulsed the heart of the settler, as he became aware of the object of his enemies, is more than our pen can do. He was not afraid to die, but a death by fire is one from which the bravest would shrink. There was no chance of dying by suffocation, for the log was full of seams that admitted the

air. No, death would not come to his relief until the red flames should wrap his body like a winding-sheet. Hours must elapse before the flames would reach him. The tree was a resinous pine, and would burn briskly for a while on the outside, but the interior of the shell was damp, and would not catch so readily. But the torture would be only the more prolonged. Death would come at last, but not until it had been experienced, as it were, a dozen times by the unhappy man within.

Higher and higher the red flames rose, as the dry brush was heaped upon the glowing pile. Like so many spirits of evil, the red demons worked at their terrible task. To avenge their comrade was grimly in their minds, and as the minutes went on, they listened for some shriek to come from the flames to delight their savage hearts.

Already he could feel the heat, and in a few moments more it would be insupportable. Once he had tried to escape from his shell, but found that the aperture had been so securely closed up that it was impossible. Death by their arrows would, he thought, have been better than the flames, but this was denied him. Hotter and hotter it became, until at last he felt a stinging on his leg as he lay upon his side. A place had burnt through, and now the terrible torture had begun. The end was not now far away, and with thoughts of his wife and children uppermost in his breast, he waited for death. Higher and higher rose the red flames, as the savages worked steadily for the death of their victim; but it was so fated that theirs was to be accomplished first. A loud report, and a volley of bullets came ringing through the leaves, and the five savages fell to rise no more; and the next moment a dozen of Dick's neighbours from the settlement, who had been in pursuit all the past day and night, rushed forward, and an exclamation of disappointment fell from their lips as they saw nothing of the object of their search.

The next moment the report of a rifle rang out as if from the very centre of the fire, startling them back apiece; but the next moment one of them, who had been examining the end of the log that as yet was untouched by the fire, exclaimed—

"Quick, boys—tear away the fire! He is in this log, and the redskins were roasting him alive!"

With a will the brands were scattered in the forest, and in a few moments Dick was hauled out, more dead than alive, though not much burnt; and afterwards, whenever he told his story, he always said that his rifle saved his life, the heat causing it to be discharged just at the right moment.

THE HARVEST.—From nearly all parts of the world our last report speaks of harvest work as being retarded by heavy rains, and in some countries the favourable anticipations hitherto entertained have been rudely shaken. According to our correspondents in Canada and America, the out-turn of barley on that continent will be thirty per cent. below last year's crop, the quality being very deficient. In this country, too, a great quantity of this cereal will have to be used as feed, not being in a fit condition for malting purposes. — *Agricultural World*.

The Angler Fish (*Lophius Piscatorius*) at the Brighton Aquarium.

MANY specimens of this curious creature have from time to time been captured and brought to the various aquariums; but none of them have succeeded as yet in naturalizing one to life in a tank. Either the fish, being large size, got injured in transit, or some accident or other always has occurred which has caused the death of every specimen in a few days.

A very perfect specimen, in fine condition, and not too large for easy transit, it being about fifteen inches long, was brought to the Brighton Aquarium lately. It was placed in one of the table tanks, and, being thoroughly healthy and uninjured, soon began to feed, and shows now every sign of strong vitality. The curious habits of the creature, and its strange, uncouth figure, render it an object of much interest.

When General Grant was visiting the Aquarium recently, it was induced to swallow a good-sized live gurnard; this fish was some six or seven inches long, and the angler, opening his huge cavernous mouth, bolted him head foremost in a moment. The tail protruded from his mouth, another gulp and it was gone, transferred to the curious natural pouch which forms his larder.

When it first sees its prey it begins to get excited, and works its fly-rod—a curious filament with a glittering piece of skin at the top—which acts as a lure to the small fish, and which springs upright from the top of the head, near the nostrils. This curious appendage is used just as if the creature were trying to throw a fly to tempt the fish, and it has the effect. Its colour is so like to the bottom, and its habit is to bury itself in the sand so much, that the small fish do not observe it, but advance to inspect the skinny bait, when the huge mouth below opens and engulphs them.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

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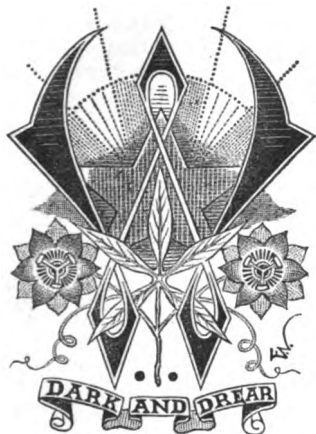
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CHAPTER XXVII.—DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE.



ELL, sir," said old Matt, as he appeared, brushed-up and smart for the occasion, punctual to his appointment—"now, sir; here we are—baptism, marriage, and doctor. First ought to come last, you know, only St. Mark's Church comes before Finsbury, don't you see?"

Septimus Hardon rose from his writing with a sigh, for he was far from sanguine of success, and would fain even now have given up his task entirely, so feeble seemed to him the likelihood of any advantage accruing; but, in obedience to instructions from Mrs. Septimus, old Matt rattled on about the future, thoroughly doing his duty in keeping the shrinking man to his part; and so they started.

They made their way out into Holborn, and then up Skinner-street, past the frowning walls of Newgate, and into the street of the same name; when old Matt could not get along for stopping to admire the various joints displayed, and giving his opinion upon their merits.

"Here, let's go this way, sir," he said, turning into Warwick-lane. "Pretty game this, sir, isn't it? Slaughtered sheep, and murdered novels, and books of all sorts close together. Authors' sheep's-heads and butchers' sheep's-heads cheek by jowl. Rum thing for both trades to get so close together. Regular bit of philosophy, if you like to take it up, sir; stomach and brains, you see, food for both—books for the brains, meat for the stomach; and then backwards and forwards, one feeds the other, and one couldn't get on without the other; and here they are situated close to the very heart of the City. Look at the circulation going on—wonderful, aint it, sir?"

Old Matt stopped by a slaughter-house, not to pity the simple animal just killed, but to point out sundry choice portions that might be had bargains, if they could have availed themselves of the opportunity.

"Wouldn't do, though, to go about such a job as we have on hand carrying a sheep's-head, would it, sir?" he observed to Septimus.

"No; pray come along, and let's get our task over," exclaimed the latter.

"To be sure," said Matt, coming to himself, and the next minute they were in Paternoster-row. "Lots

of my old friends here," said Matt, stopping short in the middle of the narrow way, to be hustled by boys laden with sheets of paper fresh from the press, lads carrying reams, or newly-bound works tied between boards; men with blue bags over their shoulders heavily laden with books; men with oblong "mems" in their hands which they consulted as they hurried from swinging door to swinging door, collecting the publications of the different firms. Once the old man was nearly run over by a truck full of type-galleys driven by a pair of reckless imps of some neighbouring printing office; while at least four times he came into contact with the fruit baskets of the nymphs in stout boots and flattened bonnets whose haunt is the labyrinth of learning known as "the Row."

"Lots of my old friends here," said Matt, as his companion looked bewildered, and was thrust off the pavement; on to it again; into booksellers' where he did not want to go; and once against the muddy wheel of a cab, whose driver roundly abused him for nearly getting himself injured. "Lots of my old friends here. Ah, you needn't mind a bit of pushing, sir—it's a busy place. Now, you know, if I liked to hunt about, I could find more than one bit of my work here, for I've done things and bits of things that's come out in more than half these places. All sorts of stuff; and what a sight of work a man can be put upon in a matter of fifty year, from playbills to prayer-books, and down again to penny-a-lining and posters! Law and physic's been my strongest points—but there, I've been on your magazines, and newspapers, and three-volume novels, and pamphlets, and everything else that's printed on a leaf, 'cept last dying-speeches and half-penny songs; and I never did get down quite so low as that. I've taken hold of author's copy so queer that it's made you scratch your head and turn the paper t'other way up to see which is tops and which is bottoms, and then back again, for you've been as wise as ever. Talk about ants and bluebottles running over the paper with inky feet—that's nothing, sir. You've seen them painter chaps, sir, graining the shetters of shops?"

Septimus, seeing that he was expected to say something, roused himself from his brown study, and nodded.

"Well," continued Matt, "you see they have what they call a tool, though it's only a flat brush made like a comb, and with that they make lines cross and across the panels, all about the same distance apart, and then they dab them lightly with a long soft brush, to keep the grain from looking too stiff and hard. Well, I've had copy that's looked as if the author had used one of these tools dipped in ink, and streaked it across and across the paper, and then dabbed it, not with a very soft brush, but with a very hard one—shoving in, too, a few smears and blots, just to fill up as knots and specimens of cross-grain. Up one goes to the overseer and asks him to help you, giving the other men a side-grin at the same time. He takes it, looks at it, turns it over, and then can't make anything of it, though he won't say so; for overseers must of course seem to know everything. So he sticks it back in your hand, and says he, 'Go and make the best you can of it; for I'm busy.' Well, you go back, and make the best

you can of it: puzzles out one word, jumps at another, puts in two, and guesses two more, while you make a couple more out of the next line fit in somewhere after 'em; and so, one way or another, it gets scrambled up, and the proof goes to the reader, who cuffs his boy's head because he blunders so over the stuff he can't make head nor tail of, though he's as much bothered as his boy; while, though some of them are clever, intelligent fellows, some of those readers, sir, have about as much imagination as a mop. They're down upon a wrong letter, or bad pointing or spelling, and stick a big qy. ? against a bit of slack grammar, like lightning; but give 'em a take of stuff where the author goes a little out of the regular rut, and it bothers them as much as the bit of copy I'm talking about. Well, sir, corrections get made, and the proof is sent in to the author, who most likely don't know it again; but he sends it back so as one has a better chance of getting it together; and so it goes on, backwards and forwards, till it's all right, and they write 'press' in one corner, when it's printed, and, as far as we're concerned, there's an end of it. Strange ways, aint they, sir?"

Septimus Hardon stared in a bewildered manner at the speaker, but did not answer.

"Blest if I think he's heard a word I've said," muttered the old fellow.

"Strange?" said Septimus, rousing himself; "yes—very."

"Tis, sir," said Matt, who was interested in his subject. "Now, do you know, sir," he continued, after they had walked part of the way along the Row—"do you know that if I was younger, I should be for founding a society, to be called the 'Printers' Spectacle Association,' supported by contributions from writers for the press, who by this means would supply us with glasses, for often and often they quite destroy our sight."

Old Matt's dissertation was put an end to by the driver of one of the Delivery carts, when, returning to the matter which had brought them from home, the strange couple were soon threading their way along Cheapside.

There was but little difficulty in getting access to the registers of the old church, and not a very long search brought the seekers to the entry, in brown ink upon yellow paper, of the baptism of Septimus, son of Octavius and Lavinia Hardon, January 17, —; but though the ages of the children before and after were entered, by some omission his was absent.

A copy was taken by both, and then they stood once more in the open street.

"Just as I told you, sir," said Matt, "isn't it? There's the date; but it don't say how old you were."

"No," replied Septimus; "but still it is satisfactory, so far. Now we'll see about the marriage, and then visit Finsbury."

"You know the church?" said Matt.

"Well, not exactly," said Septimus, dreamily. "There are two in the street; but it was at one of them."

"Good," said the old man.

And soon after they stood in the street of two churches, and, taking the most imposing, they obtained admission to the vestry, where, after a long

and careful search of the time-stained register, they were compelled to give up, for there was no result; while the regular way in which the leaves followed proved that none were missing.

"Try t'other," said Matt, laconically.

And soon after they entered the damp, mouldy-smelling receptacle of the registers at the second church—a quaint, queerly-built place that looked as if architecture had been set at defiance when it was erected.

Old Matt was quiet and laconic enough in his speech; but, as leaf after leaf was turned over, it was evident that the old man was more deeply interested than Septimus himself; for he grew so excited, that he was voracious with his snuff, his nose becoming a very devouring dragon of Scotch and rappee, till the supposed date of the marriage was neared, when the snuff was hastily pocketed.

"Rayther rheumatic spot this, I should think," said Matt to the sexton, so as to appear quite at his ease.

"Well, yes, it *is* damp," said the sexton, who would have had no difficulty in passing himself off as Matt's brother; "but we have a fire here on Sundays all through the winter."

"Don't have many berrin's now, I s'pose," said Matt, again bringing out the snuff, but this time for hospitable purposes.

"Bless you, no," said the sexton, "aint had one for years upon years. All cemetery work now."

"To be sure, of course," said Matt, trying to converse in a cool, pleasant way, but with one eye fixed upon the trembling searcher; for some of Matt's eagerness seemed to be now transferred to his companion.

"There's a great piece of the book out here," said Septimus, suddenly—"most of the year before the baptism."

"Torn out, by Jove!" muttered Matt, shaking his head, and looking suspicion's self.

"Dessay there is, sir," said the sexton, coolly; "the damp here would spile the binding of any book."

"But, I say; look here, you sir; here's a good four months gone: no Jennywerry, nor Feberwerry, nor March, nor April. Looks precious queer," said Matt.

"Ah, so there is—good big bit gone; all but a leaf here and there." And then, to get a better look, the sexton took out an old leathern case, drew out his spectacles, replaced the case very carefully, wiped the glasses upon the tail of his coat, and then very leisurely put them on—a process not directly completed; for, like their master, the springs of the spectacles had grown weak, and were joined by a piece of black tape, which had to be passed carefully over the sexton's head to keep the glasses in their place. "Ah," he said, again, while the searchers looked on, astonished at his coolness, "so there is—a good big bit gone; but 'tain't no wonder, for the thread's as rotten as tinder, and—"

"I say, old un, don't tear any more out," cried Matt, excitedly; for the sexton was experimentally disposed, and testing the endurance of the thread and glue.

"There's plenty loose," said the old sexton, "and

I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you find a lot more gone."

Septimus Hardon looked at Matt, who returned the look, for the feeling of suspicion was now fully shared. However, they still went on carefully searching.

"It's of no use," said Septimus, at last, mournfully; "we may as well go. I never had any hope."

"Don't be in a hurry, sir," said Matt. "You know there are other ways of killing the cat, as the old saying says; wait a bit. Looks suspicious, certainly," he said, treating himself to a fresh pinch of snuff. "I say, guv'nor, you haven't got the loose leaves lying about anywhere, have you? Not been taken away that you know of, eh?"

The sexton shook his head, thrust his hands to the bottom of his trousers-pockets, shrugged his shoulders to his ears, and then stood gazing at his visitors with his spectacles high up on his forehead.

"No," said he, "nobody never meddles with 'em, 'cept a lawyer's clerk now and then; and they're very civil, and just copies out something, and gives me a shilling, and then goes."

Septimus Hardon took the hint in its first acceptance, while the mouldy old sexton removed one hand from his pocket to accept the proffered shilling held to him, before his visitors were about to take the second part of the hint.

As they moved off through the damp old church, Septimus Hardon wondered whether, upon some bright morning half a century before, his father and mother had knelt before that altar and been made one.

He sighed as he walked on, meeting in the entrance a tall, gentlemanly-looking man who was passing in.

"What's to be done next, Matt?" said Septimus, in a dispirited tone.

"Pint of porter and crust o' bread and cheese," said the old man, decidedly. "I'm faint, sir—got a fit of my chronics; but it's taking me the wrong way to-day. I'm hungry, and you must want support. Keep your chin in the air, sir; we can't win every time. You've had two tries this morning, and one's come all right. That register looks suspicious, certainly; but, after all, you can't even go and swear that your old people were married in that church; and even if you could, and had the copy of the stiff-kit, that aint all we want, for it don't prove that you weren't a year old then."

"Hi!" cried a voice behind them.

And upon the cry being repeated, they both turned to find that the old sexton was telegraphing them to come back, by wagging his head in the direction of the church-door.

"What's up now?" said old Matt, when they reached him.

"Parson wants to see you in the westry," was the reply.

Anxiously following the old man, Septimus Hardon found himself in the presence of the gentleman he had encountered at the door.

"I think," said he, "that you have been complaining of the bad state of our registers, and really we deserve it. I have only been here a few weeks, and

have done but little towards getting them right. However, I have quite fifty loose leaves and pieces arranged here ready for pasting back, though I can assure you it is no light task."

As he spoke, he took down from a little closet on the wall a heap of damp-stained, ragged, worthless-looking paper, and then set himself to try and help discover the required name.

"Hardon," he said—"Hardon, Octavius Hardon and Lavinia Addison. We'll lay those that are done with down here, if you please; for, though they do not appear so, the leaves are in a certain order. Hardon, Hardon, Octavius, and Lavinia Addison," he kept on muttering, as Septimus and he carefully examined column after column amongst the dilapidated leaves; though Septimus progressed but slowly, for his hand trembled and a mist swam before his eyes.

"Take a glass of wine," said the curate, kindly, producing a decanter and glass from the little cupboard; "you seem agitated."

Septimus took the glass with trembling hand, and then resumed his task with increased energy, till at last there were not above half a dozen leaves to scan, when he uttered an exclamation of joy, for there, upon a scrap before him—torn, stained, and almost illegible—was the sought-for entry, bearing the well-known signature of his father, and the trembling handwriting of his mother.

"Here, here, Matt," he whispered—"look!" and the paper quivered in his hands—"Octavius Hardon, Lavinia Addison," and signed by her old friend Miss Morris."

"Right it is, so far," said Matt, holding his glasses to his eyes wrong way foremost, with both hands, "and just a year and a half before the baptism. Now, you know, sir, I pitched it pretty strong before now, so as you shouldn't expect too much; but it's my belief that, after all said and done, we've got enough documentary evidence; and things seeming so very regular, if you had begun as you should have done, unless there was something very strong on the other side that we can't see through, you must have got a verdict. But then I hardly like for you to try on this only; for the law's a ticklish thing to deal with, and though this all looks so straightforward, it don't prove against what your uncle says, and will bring witnesses to swear."

"But how can he?" exclaimed Septimus, in a whisper.

"Ah," said Matt, refreshing himself after his wont, "how can he? Why, by means of that comical stuff as he's been so anxious to get hold of. Why, sir, he could find witnesses as would swear to any mortal thing on the face of this earth; they'd almost undertake to prove as you weren't born at all, sir. Mind, I don't say that they'd carry the day, sir; but I'm only telling you of what villany there is in this world, and how you must be prepared, even to fighting the dev—I beg your pardon, sir," said Matt, bashfully, as he pulled up short, having in his earnestness forgotten the presence of the third party.

"I'm sorry to say that there's a great deal of truth in what you assert," said the curate, quietly; for Septimus was looking at him in an appealing way as if expecting that he would demolish all that Matt

had advanced. "Suborned witnesses are nothing new in this world of ours."

"Pull out your note-book, sir, and let's take it down," said Matt.

And as he spoke, he drew out an old dog-eared memorandum-book and a stumpy fragment of lead pencil that would not mark without being kissed and coaxed every moment, when he copied the entry most carefully, compared it with the original, and then with that just made by Septimus Hardon.

"Really," said the clergyman, at parting, "I am extremely glad to have met you this morning, and you may depend upon finding us in better order at your next visit."

"There has been no trickery there, you see, Matt," said Septimus, as they stood once more in the street; "all seems straightforward."

"Just so, sir; your uncle seems to have some game of his own that I can't see quite through as yet; but stop a bit. Good sort o' chap that young parson. I'll ask him to dinner some day, though he didn't say, 'Take a glass of sherry, Matthew Space.' Then how careful you ought to be! Now I should have been ready to swear that your precious uncle had been at them books. S'pose he aint so much older than you, sir?"

"Not many years," replied Septimus. "He was my poor father's younger brother. But now for the doctor!" he said, in an elated tone.

"Thanky, sir, but suppose we have the porter and bread-and-cheese first. You youngsters are so rash and impatient; and besides, I didn't taste that fine old dry sherry, you know. One thing at a time's the best plan, and it seems to me that a little refreshment's the next thing wanted. Taint no use to suppose, sir, that because a horse has won one race he'll go and polish off the next the same hour. D'yer see, sir?"

Septimus expressed himself as being able to see, and he submitted forthwith to his companion's guidance.

Now, most people would imagine that Matt entered the first inviting open portal that presented itself, where the gorgeously-embazoned boards announced the retailing of So-and-so's entire; but no. Old Matt seemed very particular and hard to please, passing house after house before he could meet with one to his satisfaction; and in a quarter of an hour's brisk walk a few public-houses can be passed in London streets. But Matt had something else on his mind besides draught stout; and at last, when Septimus Hardon's patience was well-nigh exhausted, the old man stopped short before a place where the window displayed a notice to the effect that the Post-office Directory was at the bar.

"There," said Matt, pointing to the window, "thought me a nuisance now, didn't you, sir? But that's what I wanted. So now we'll have our stout and cheese, and look at the doctors too."

Seated in the public-house parlour, fragrant with the fumes of flat beer and stale tobacco, they were soon discussing the foaming stout and more solid refreshments, though Septimus spent the greater part of his time poring over the volume he had laid open upon the gum-ringed table—a volume that Matt considered would be as useful as a medical

directory. Surgeons there were in plenty; but only one answering to the name of Phillips, and he was practising at Newington.

"Moved there, perhaps," said Matt.

Septimus Hardon shook his head, and read again, "Phillips, E. J., Terrace, Newington."

"Stop a bit, sir," said Matt, rising and catching the ring hung from the ceiling, and pulling the bell.—"Here, fill that pint again, my man; and, I say, got another of these d'rectories anywheres?"

"Yes," said the pot-boy, "there's another somewhere—an old 'un."

"That's the ticket, my lad; bring it in."

The boy performed the, to him, satisfactory feat of pitching the pot in the air, and catching it with one hand as he went out, though the performance was somewhat marred by the vessel turning in its flight, and announcing its descent by a small frothy brown shower, which sprinkled the performer's countenance. However, he was soon back with the re-filled measure, and a very dirty, very dusty, dog-eared old copy of the Directory, with one cover torn off, and a general aspect of its having been used for generations as the original London Spelling-book.

Septimus seized the bulky tome, and soon had the right page found.

In this volume there was no mention of E. J. Phillips, of Newington.

"Young beginner," said Matt, hollowly; for he had the pewter vessel to his lips. "Any one else same name?"

"Two more," cried Septimus, in a husky voice: "Phillips, Thomas, Camden-town; Phillips, Nicholas, Chiswell-street."

"Hooray!" cried Matt, thumping down the pewter-pot, so that a portion of the contents splashed over into the cheese-dish. "That's the man we want, sir; so finish your crust and cheese, and then off we go."

And shrewd old Matt forgot to ask himself in his excitement how it was that the name was not in the Directory of ten years later date, but acted up to what he was advising; and, then, late in the afternoon, they again started on their search.

It was not a very long walk from Walbrook to Chiswell-street; but old Matt made very little progress, halting at times as if in pain, while in answer to inquiries he only smiled and declared that it was his "chronics." Now he panted and seemed out of breath, then he paused at one of his favourite halting-places, but too short of breath to make a speech, even had he felt so disposed. At the last stoppage, induced by Septimus Hardon's eager strides, the old man panted out—

"Let's see, sir; you walked down to Somesham, didn't you?"

"Yes," replied Septimus, somewhat surprised at the question. "Come along."

For he was now as eager to continue the quest as he had formerly been to avoid it.

"That's all very well," said Matt, panting; "but I shouldn't have liked to walk with you, and if Chiswell-street had been t'other side the square, you'd have had to carry me, so I tell you; and—"

"Is anything wrong?" exclaimed Septimus, anx-

iously, for his companion had turned very pale and haggard.

"Not much," he gasped; "better d'rectly—out of breath rather."

But he seemed to grow so much worse, that all thought of farther search was forgotten in the anxiety to get the old man to the principal thoroughfare, for he stoutly refused to hear of a cab being called; though he sank back thoroughly exhausted in a corner of the omnibus, when at last the right one passed with room inside.

A quiet cup of tea and an hour's rest seemed to restore the old man, and he rose to leave Bennett's-rents, firmly refusing to allow Septimus to walk home with him, though it was only by slow stages and great exertion that he reached his lodging.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE CURATE AT HOME.

THE task of the Reverend Arthur Sterne was weary, and one that might have made him sigh had he known no other troubles. Work, work, of the most disheartening character for the most part; and it was only in rare instances that he could feel in his own heart that his labours had been of any avail. Here he would listen to a hypocritical tale of woe, there to a story of real sorrow; now his task would be to try and point out some foolish, reckless piece of extravagance; then to call to account for folly and idleness. Everywhere there was the same display of live to-day and let to-morrow take care of itself. Forethought and providence seemed to know no home in Bennett's-rents and the neighbourhood, perhaps because hope had often been so long deferred that the sickened hearts believed in it no more. Dirt everywhere, drunkenness frequently, vice often, with their followings of sorrow, repentance, disease, and death. Years, however, had made him to be looked upon as a friend, and his step was always welcomed, while, effecting what good he could, he toiled patiently on; fearing no fever, dreading no epidemic, but ever ready, he visited the bedside of the stricken—the vilest or the most unfortunate—ready to join his prayers to theirs for pardon, to point out the long-neglected road that should have been taken, to teach the ignorant the words they had never known, or perhaps forgotten years upon years before. His was a task that knew but little earthly recompense, save the knowledge of duty done; but many a parting soul blessed him with lips soon to be motionless for ever, or thanked him with those glazing eyes from which the wild, despairing look had faded, as he knelt in intercession for one whose opportunity for better things had never come, but who, born into the misery and wretchedness of a great town, had passed in it the life now about to be given up at the stern call that knows no refusal.

It was a weary task amidst so poor and wretched a flock; but could the curate have been at rest, he would have been happy in the good he effected, and the simple confidence now placed in him by those he visited. Even Bill Jarker had of late taken to pulling off his fur-cap and picking it when they met; and there was no hypocrisy in the salutation, for it was wrung from him by the genuine respect he felt. But then the curate was not at rest, for he had now

thoroughly awakened to the germs which had rooted themselves to his heart, growing more and more, till his very life was interlaced with the strong fibres. Now, he would deliberately try to eradicate the growth, tearing and lacerating himself in his efforts to rid himself of the unbidden guest; but the progress he made was slow in comparison with the growth he fought against. Blindly, though, he would tell himself that he had conquered, that the last root was torn out, and the door of his heart closed against further entrance. And then, in the pride of his believed victory, he would tell himself of how he had been about to lavish riches upon one beneath him, and unworthy; when his heart would reply that love was a leveller, and laugh to scorn the subtle distinctions of caste; reminding him, too, that this maiden had grown up as it were beneath his eye, that he had watched her for years, while she was as well born, perhaps, as he. And then, in his heart, there would shoot forth a tiny green blade, then there was the opening leaf, and soon again the blossom; while roots spread here and there, lacing and interlacing stronger and stronger than ever, as if he had been by his efforts merely preparing the soil for a richer growth of the ever-verdant clinging plant that he sought in vain to tear away.

So wearily on, day after day, passed the curate's life, a struggle between the natural affection and self-imposed duty, while night after night in his sleepless hours he heaped reproaches upon himself for work neglected, and the dreamy musings into which he was wont to fall. Self-deceiving, he had gone on taking more and more interest in the Hardon family, blinding himself to his real sentiments, until now that the veil had been so rudely snatched from his eyes he writhed hourly, maddened almost, that he should have allowed his peace to have been disturbed for what he fiercely told himself was worthless.

It was not a long walk from the Bennett's-rents region to Surrey-street, where he had rooms in a gloomy wilderness of a house, which he shared with a solicitor, an accountant, and a company that seemed to be composed of a small secretary and a large heap of prospectuses. Here he would seek for the rest he could not find, anxious and worn, day after day, since his last visit to the Hardons, much to the discomposure of Aunt Fanny, who dwelt with him in the double capacity of housekeeper and companion.

A prim, pleasant old dame, proud of her great age, and of her bright silver hair, smoothed in bands beneath her quaint old widow's cap; sitting or standing, ever with her arms crossed over her black corded silk apron, while a mitten-covered hand clasped each elbow. A prim, pleasant-looking old dame, always dressed in lavender poplin, whose stiff plaits seemed to have been carved out of the solid, as she stood at the window watching for the coming of her boy. For "Arty" always had been, and doubtless always would be, a boy in her pleasant old eyes—eyes that spoke the truth of her tender old heart; though there was one point upon which Aunt Fanny would err, and that was her age. Unlike ladies of a certain time of life, she was proud of her years, and, doubtless from some

haziness in her arithmetic, she was given to adding to them, so that more than once, in her arguments respecting points of time, she somewhat upset her calculations.

"Why, aunt," the curate would say, "you cannot be so old as you say by eight years."

"Nonsense, my dear boy, how can you know anything about it? I'm eighty-two."

"Then," he would say, loudly, "you must have been thirty when you were married."

"Nonsense, child; how can you be so silly! And you need not shout so. I was twenty-two when your poor uncle led me to the altar."

And then she would fall to smoothing her black apron, and arranging the folds of her dress, with hands that trembled in an agitated manner, a tear standing in one of the still bright eyes as the old recollections sprang up, when, ceasing the discussion, her nephew would tenderly kiss her hand, and sit affectionately gazing in her handsome old face. Indeed, time had paid a certain respect to Aunt Fanny, so that she looked years younger than she really was, while all her faculties save one were bright as ever; for proud though she was of the fine stitching placed with her own needle round Arty's shirt-fronts—stitching aided by no spectacles—and ignorant though she was of her failing, yet Aunt Fanny was terribly deaf.

But she hardly felt the affliction, speaking of it as a slight weakness which affected her when she had a cold, always remaining unconscious that what she looked upon as a whisper was a conversation carried on in a loud key. Poor Aunt Fanny could not hear very well from her pew in the gallery, right in front of the organ, for the thing would make, she said, such a terrible buzzing sound; so a seat was provided for her just beneath the pulpit, which she found necessary, for clergymen were not what they used to be. On the following Sunday, her nephew had ascended to his place, spread out the black-velvet case she had made for his sermons, prayed, and given out his text twice, when, before the first words of the sermon were uttered, Aunt Fanny began to mutter to herself, though her muttering was so loud that every one present in the little church must have heard it, her nephew himself being overwhelmed with confusion.

"Dear, dear, dear!" she exclaimed; "it's of no use, and I can't hear a bit. I might just as well have stayed where I was. Oh, Arty, Arty, you sad boy, why will you mumble so?"

Arty did not mumble any more that evening, but dashed headlong into his discourse; so that when they returned Aunt Fanny thought she rather liked the new seat the better of the two. Still it was of no avail; the old lady could never hear well in that church; for rector and curate had both got into a bad habit of speaking in a low tone, and drawling out their words. But Aunt Fanny's pity was sublime in the case of a friend also troubled with deafness; though he knew it, and did not scruple to make an ear-trumpet of his hand, though this was needless when Aunt Fanny was the speaker, for her sentences were always perfectly audible. "Poor Edwards!" she would say, as she smoothed down her apron, "what a nice man you'd be if you weren't so deaf!

It's a pity—a great pity!" And then she would sigh, in profound ignorance that "poor Edwards's" confusion was caused by her habit of thinking aloud.

And this was the companion of Arthur Sterne's solitude; but there were pleasant smiles to welcome him, and beneath their sunny rays the deeply-cut lines that seamed his forehead grew less marked, while the light of the pleasant old sunny face was reflected in his own.

Aunt Fanny had seen the change that had come over her nephew, and waited patiently for his complaints, which came not; and after many days, unable to contain her anxiety, she crossed to where the curate was sitting, and, taking his hand, frowned severely as she felt his pulse.

"Well, aunty, and how is it?" he said, smiling at the earnest countenance beside his.

But Aunt Fanny was too much occupied with her thoughts to speak, and only nodded, and then shook her head, as, in her own mind, she went over her long catalogue of simples suited to the various ills of human life, till at last she settled upon camomile-tea as being the most efficacious remedy for her nephew's complaint, which she settled to be disorder of the liver, produced from over-work, and not a word would she hear to the contrary.

"Now, don't shout, my dear; I'm not deaf. You know you do too much; and if you won't petition the bishop for a change, I shall. What do you say to a pleasant curacy in some pretty country place?"

Nothing. What could he say, when he had awakened to the fact that, in spite of pride and doubts, that court was all the world to him?

Appeal was useless; so, yielding with as good a grace as he could, the curate suffered himself to be doctored for his complaint, turning to his books for rest at every reprieve. If it had not been for the heat of the next few days, he would not have been allowed to stir out without the thick muffler that had been aired for his throat; while the many appellants who visited the lodging of a morning were answered by Aunt Fanny herself—for many came to ask advice and comfort of the curate, more especially from amongst the poor Irish; but though they came ostensibly for spiritual, they generally managed to explain that a little solid help would be most acceptable.

Till now, living in their quiet, simple way, the relations between them being more like those existent with mother and son, Arthur Sterne had had no secret from the dame; but now, when he would gladly have eased his burdened heart by confidence, he shrank from laying bare its secrets, even though he was in that state when men are most prone to be confidential. But there was to him something repugnant in the idea of shouting words that seemed to demand that they should be whispered in the twilight of some calm eve, when the reassuring pressure of that time-marked hand would have been loving and tender. For she had been to him as a mother, taking that duty on herself when he had been left an orphan; and now there seemed ingratitude in keeping back any of the troubles of his life. He had no doubts respecting Aunt Fanny. Did he but bring there a wife, and say, "I love this woman,"

she would take her to her heart and believe in her; for, saving the mumbling in his speech, Arthur Sterne could not, in her eyes, do wrong. Still, the secret was kept—feverishly kept—and brooded over in the sleepless nights, or in those dark watches when, impatiently quitting the pillow that brought no rest, he walked the streets of the sleeping city, alone, or in company with some policeman; when mostly his steps would lead him to the end of the court, where, in Septimus Hardon's window, generally glimmered a feeble light—one whose purpose he often asked himself.

At times he would determine to flee the place, and in some far-off country retreat try again to root out the love that had taken hold on him; for here he felt that he could not reason with himself. In vain he conjured up visions of a calm, pale face, whose marble cheek he had once kissed, an hour before it was laid in the grave; in vain he told himself that he was faithless to that old love, and failing in his duty. There still was the sweet, gentle face of Lucy Grey haunting him ever; and though he recalled the words of the old Frenchwoman, and her sinister meaning—the meeting in the Lane, and, above all, the look of shame and confusion—there was the same sense of love beating down all else. But he had made a resolve at last; and that was to see and question the woman he had seen in Lucy's company: he would see her, and then seek for rest somewhere, since the idol he had unconsciously set up was sullied and broken.

Twice over he had met this woman, but now his efforts to see her seemed in vain. He called at the Jarkers' again and again; but, in place of her coming, as Mrs. Jarker said, to see her child, and leave the weekly payment for its support, week after week, as if she knew that she was watched, she sent money-orders by post. He shrank from speaking to Mrs. Jarker concerning her connection with Lucy; while Lucy herself he had not seen. Watching seemed useless, for the woman came not; and at last, almost in despair, he had determined to undertake that which his heart shrank from—the questioning of Lucy herself.

At last, after a long and busy day, as now had become his wont, he wandered through the streets for hours, apparently feeling no fatigue, till, late in the night, he stopped by the Rents, walked slowly up the deserted court, lit by its solitary, flickering lamp, whose broken glass made the flame dance and tremble, while when an extra puff of wind passed down the court it was all but extinct. There was the faint light, though, in one of the rooms occupied by the Hardons, and after standing watching it for some time he hurried away, calling himself foolish, romantic boy, madman. It was but a passing fancy, he told himself, such a one as might have moved him in his youth; but his heart would not harbour the belief, and mockingly cast it forth.

He was angry and half-maddened to feel how helpless he was, and what a sway the impulse now moving him had obtained; to think that he—the minister of religion, the teacher of others—should have so little power over self that he should be swayed here and driven there helplessly; the whole current of his quiet life turned from its course, and

that, too, in spite of the way in which he had battled, while the doubts that assailed him only added to his misery.

Now, as he hurried on, he would meet some policeman, who turned to watch him; now it would be some drunken reveller, or a wretched, homeless being just started from some corner where he had been sleeping, and compelled to wander the streets till daybreak; but ever and again he would encounter the flauntingly-dressed outcast humming the snatch of a popular air with a wretched attempt at gaiety, which lasted till she had passed, and then almost broke into a wail. But he managed that they should always meet face to face beneath some gas-lamp, when he would sigh and pass on, for not one that he met during his search was the woman of the Lane.

Mrs. Jarker did not know her name, nor yet where she lodged; but the little girl was to be called Agnes. That was all the information the curate could obtain; and at times he would frown, bite his lips, and give up the search, but only to take it up once again for what he always told himself was the last time. Then he would play the hypocrite, and tell himself that his motives were unselfish; that to marry a girl in Lucy's position of life would be folly—absurd: he was only anxious for her well-being and future life.

But these fits lasted only for a short time, and then, smiling bitterly, he would, as upon this night, betake himself to the search once more.

And yet it was not on his account she came not to Bennett's-rents, for Agnes Hardon knew not of his quest. She had other reasons, though the visits to her child and Lucy were the only bright spots in her wretched life. Lucy heard from her from time to time through old Matt, who bore her notes always under protest, but still obediently, though Lucy was the only one who knew the poor creature's secret, and she dared not make it known to Septimus, lest he should forbid their meetings; for, abandoned by all, hopeless, and in misery, Agnes Hardon clung to her connection with Lucy as the only hope left on earth for self and child. Her appeals to Somesham remaining unanswered, she had ceased to send, and, removing from lodging to lodging, any attempt upon Mrs. Hardon's part to find her would have been in vain. She had shrunk from the keen, searching glances of the curate when they had met, seeing in every one now an enemy whose object was to break her intimacy with Lucy, whom she, therefore, saw only by stealth. Her heart bled for the misery of the family, for she learned all from time to time at their meetings; while, knowing full well that there was a will made, to which she had signed her name as witness, yet could she not declare her knowledge, from a shrewd suspicion that the doctor had made away with it; and she told herself that she had already brought sorrow and shame enough upon her home.

And, to meet her, night by night stole Arthur Sterne through the streets, ever hating himself for his madness, ever resolving that each search should be the last, and still weakly yielding to the one great anxiety that troubled him. Now he would be seeing Lucy's candid face reproachfully gazing at him, and directly after would come

again the bitter, spiteful countenance of the Frenchwoman, and he seemed to hear her words, "Our beauty, some of us;" and at such times all faith in the girl had gone. "Our beauty, some of us!" How the words seemed to ring in his ears. They were borne to him in the echo of the far-off vehicle, chimed by the clocks; the very air seemed alive with the words, till he hurried on through street after street again, to try and thoroughly wear himself out, that sleep might come, and with it rest from the mental anxiety and doubt he suffered.

At last he stood on one of the bridges, leaning against the parapet and gazing down at the hurrying river, feeling the soft sweet breeze of early dawn sweep up with the tide, whispering of the moaning sea and far-off reaches where the green reeds sighed and rustled, and the wide green marshes were spread out. There was a faint light coming in the east, and the stars were paling, as the gas grew sickly-hued and dim. All was still and peaceful, so that he could hear the lapping of the water far below, as it seemed to whisper peace to his perturbed spirit, telling of the far-off sea and its mysteries, the hopes and fears there buried, and then of the many lost whom the river had borne down, when, from perhaps where he then stood, they had taken the last fearful plunge. And who were they? he asked himself; who were they that plunged daringly into the rushing river? and for reply the faint breeze seemed to whisper, and the tide to sigh, "Our beauty, some of us!" And then, trembling, he leaned his hot brow against the cold stone balustrade, fighting with the thoughts that oppressed him, with duty, religion, the world, till, with almost a groan, burst from his lips,

"Save her? My God! yes, as I hope to be saved!"

The early untainted breeze breathed upon his fevered lips as it rode upon the breast of the coming tide; the stars paled more and more, the faint pearly light in the east became roseate; and at last Arthur Sterne stood gazing up towards the glowing cross of the great cathedral, glittering as it was in the morning sun, while now, weary and jaded, he turned to seek his home, but only to gaze with doubting eyes, for he stood face to face with the woman he had sought through the night.

MATRIMONIAL TRIALS.—Mr. Agassiz says that, in certain Amazonian tribes, on the day of his marriage, while the festivities are going on, the bridegroom's hands are tied up in a paper bag filled with fire ants. If he bears this torture smilingly and unmoved, he is fit for the trials of matrimony.

WILD ELEPHANTS.—At the meeting of the Legislative Council, held on 20th of June, a Bill was brought in to prevent the indiscriminate destruction of wild elephants in British Burmah. It is important to preserve the herd of wild elephants in the Burmese forests, not only for military and other State purposes, but also for uses connected with the timber trade of British Burmah. It is proposed to limit the destruction of wild elephants to cases of defence of life or crops, or by licence from the district officers.

A Naturalist's Notes.

THE late warm, mild rains have greatly assisted the moulting of the soft-meat or migratory birds, such as the yellow wagtail, flycatchers, willow-wrens, wheatears, wood-wrens, blackcaps, garden warblers, redstarts, &c. When moulting they lay up in woods and spinnies, and all of a sudden they make their appearance clean-moulted at their feeding-grounds, previous to their taking their departure for the south. By the end of next month the birds above-mentioned will be nearly all cleared away, though there may be a few blackcaps seen after that. At Hampstead the close observer may just now see specimens of the above-named birds feeding on the boggy side of the Heath. The wheatears may now be seen in great numbers on the Welsh mountains, especially about Plinlimmon. This is one of their great breeding places. It is very difficult to find the nest of a wheatear; the eggs are of a pale blue colour, and about the size of a skylark's. The mother bird lays them in a nest made of shreds, feathers, and dry grass; very often the nest and eggs are artfully concealed under stones and in cracks of rocks. Wheatears will not leave us till October, so that partridge shooters have the chance of frequently seeing them. The name is derived from their call, "Wheatear."

For the last few weeks there has not been a hedgehog in the market, as they have been out on the standing crops; but as the fields are being cleared they are easily found by dogs. The "hogs" seldom or ever show themselves in the daylight; but at night they are very active, searching for beetles, slugs, field-mice, or small animal food. The fallacy of hedgehogs sucking cows is, of course, an "Old Mother Hubbard's" tale. Hedgehogs are a favourite dish among the Romanys, that is, gipsies. The Romanys kill the hog, they then roll him up in a soft casing of clay, and put him into the hot embers of a wood or turf fire; the dish takes an hour before it is properly cooked; the taste is but little known, but is said to be delicious. The gravy of a hedgehog on a bit of toast is very savoury. "Hogs" are never skinned, but cooked in the clay, bristles and all; when the clay turns red the pig is done, and by cracking the clay his bristles will be found adhering to it.

Field birds are just now making but a poor show in the London dealers' windows; those which are most conspicuous are young goldfinches, linnets, and chaffinches. This class of bird appears to be very strong for this time of year; none of them are yet clean-moulted. The scarcity of these birds may be more or less attributable to many of the bird-catchers being engaged harvesting in various parts of the country.

Woodlarks have not put in an appearance yet. They, as a rule, are not taken until they get on flight—September or October, these being the principal months for them. Skylarks are now very short in supply. This is not on account of the birds being less plentiful, but may be attributed to the three following causes:—Firstly, whereas they are caught with trammel or night nets, the fields are "bushed" for the sake of preserving the partridges, and the

nets cannot be used. Secondly, moonlight or light nets, when the birds lay wakeful. Thirdly, the corn not being yet cleared, the stubbles cannot be properly worked. These birds are unusually plentiful this year in the fields.

This is just the time of year when young vipers may be found on dry, sandy, and chalky soils in byeways, furze, commons, heaths, and lanes. Sportsmen in quest of partridges and grouse may be pretty sure to come across some of them. Sportsmen are particularly requested to observe whether vipers do or do not swallow their young. There are two schools of different creeds as regards this very old story. The doctrine of the one school is that when danger approaches the mother viper opens her mouth, and that the young ones bolt down into a pouch, where they remain concealed until danger is passed, when they come out again. The other side hold that the mother viper does not swallow its young, but that the appearance of the young ones bolting down the mother's throat is produced by the quick vibrations of her forked tongue. The cutting open of the viper, and finding the young ones alive, it is held, proves nothing, as this reptile is ovo-viviparous; and the little vipers, which are about five inches long, are wrapped up in a thin membrane very like gold-beater's skin. They are born alive. Vipers feed principally on field mice. The viper may be known by being of a dark brown, and by the letter V marked distinctly on the back of the head; along the back is a continuous line of irregular diamond-shaped markings.

The common snake, on the contrary, is easily distinguished from the viper by having a much broader head, and a bright yellow patch on either side of the cheeks, giving the appearance of a yellow ring clasped round the neck. The colour of the snake is olive green, with occasional black spots on the sides.

In marshy places and along the sides of ditches the common or grass snake (as it is sometimes called) may be seen hunting frogs—"frog feeding up" for the winter. About this time of year they cast their skins; these delicate sloughs may be sometimes found sticking between brambles or on a rough stick in hedgerows; it is turned inside out like an inverted glove. Even the transparent skin which covers the eyes is shed, and in the "slough" appears like a pair of ordinary spectacles.

When old dung-heaps, melon or cucumber beds, are removed, visitors to the country should look for snakes' eggs. These are about the size of a black-bird's egg, having a whitish leathery skin instead of a shell. On opening them with a pair of scissors the baby snake can be found coiled up inside, in a fluid very like the white of a common fowl's egg. The common snake sometimes appears vicious—hisses, and opens its mouth; but he does not bite. The viper does not bite, but rather stabs with his sharp-pointed, needle-like, poisonous fangs. Those who have been bitten by vipers say that the sensation is very like the sharp sting of a wasp, bee, or rather hornet.

There is a third kind of British snake very much resembling the viper, and only found at and about the New Forest in Hampshire. He lives entirely

upon the small green sand lizard, and is called the *coronella lævis*. This reptile is very savage, will bite severely, holding on until shaken off; but he is not poisonous. This snake is common in Germany.

Another of the reptile family, frequently seen on heaths and about lanes, is common, and is called the blind-worm, or slow-worm. This perfectly harmless little creature is about eleven inches long. Instead of being blind, it has two very beautiful, small, pearl-like eyes. It is an insect-feeder, and if irritated by handling, and let drop, will "shoot its tail." Hence it is sometimes called the fragile snake.

Young squirrels are now unusually abundant in woods and plantations. They do much mischief in destroying the bark of the young top or centre shoots of fir trees. They breed twice a year, early spring and autumn. The drays or nests contain from four to five young ones each. Squirrels of the spring brood will breed in the autumn of the same year. Squirrels are said to be very good when made into pies. The problem of killing squirrels out of fir plantations has not yet been satisfactorily solved.

In a Ravine.

"HERE we are at last!"
"And precious seedy we all look."

"Yes, that abominable Mediterranean nearly finished me off. Well, here goes to forget sea-sickness—for the next few months, at least—and thoroughly enjoy ourselves."

These remarks were uttered by Hugh Vulliamy, Guy Gee, and myself, Sidney Shipton, as we sat round a well-spread table in a French hotel, in the north of Africa, all three being pale and slightly green as to complexion, not being good sailors. It was a great consolation to each of us individually that the others were no better than himself, for no one could laugh at his companions.

It is, no doubt, a great misfortune to have plenty of money and nothing to do—or, at least, it is voted so by some of those who have but a small proportion of that necessary article, and have their time fully occupied in earning that little; but we three young men were all in that position, and the countenances of my companions had not yet assumed that expression of *ennui* and disgust at the "slowness" of things in general not unfrequently met with in our great metropolis. For my own I can say nothing; but I never feel tired of living, except during the first week of a sea voyage.

Hugh, Guy, and I, had been somewhere together for the last three years, for sporting purposes; and this time we had resolved to realize our long-cherished dream of seeing the African lion in a state of nature. Each of us had made up his mind to kill the first lion, and we had two or three bets on about it.

We did not stay long in this civilized part of the world, but hastened to get farther south; and though it was early in December, and consequently rather cold, a healthy brown was fast tinging our skins, from the open air and exercise. The highest mountains were already crowned with snow, and we heard

that it was by far the best time of year for sport, as the game, forced by the snow and cold air of the heights to do so, came down into the plains, where the temperature was milder. We should probably find hyænas, wild boars, and lions, if we were fortunate, and there seemed good prospect of adventures of an exciting nature.

We took up our quarters at a small town south-east of Morocco, and had not been there long before Guy came in one morning, having been out early, with eyes that told me at once that he had heard news. However, he took his seat at breakfast without any remark, and merely answered my query of "Is anything up?" with a quiet "Yes."

I restrained my curiosity; and, as I expected, finding he was asked no questions, he soon spoke.

"A lion has been seen at a farm not far off, and helped himself to a sheep. Here is a chance for us."

Vulliamy sprang up.

"Hurrah! Come along, boys. Don't let's lose any time."

He fetched his gun, and examined it, and we soon had all our weapons in readiness, and sallied forth. There was some excitement in the place about it, and a battue was organized, we being of the party; but with no result. No lion turned up, and we had to content ourselves for that day with smaller game. However, though we were disappointed this time, an opportunity occurred before long for us to have our wishes gratified. We had for a week or two been staying at a lodging-house on the outskirts of the town, riding out daily in search of any game that might turn up; and during this time Gee had somehow managed to make friends with an Arab chief, who had invited us all to his house, some miles from the town. Guy had expressed his desire for a shot at the king of beasts, and his new acquaintance promised that we should have the pleasure of hunting the lion very shortly if we would go.

After a little hesitation we agreed to accept the invitation, in reality not a little delighted at the novel experience thus offering itself; and a few days after we were riding out to his place. He welcomed us with much cordiality, and we learned that several lions had lately been seen in the neighbourhood, and that almost every morning the Arabs of his tribe found vacancies amongst their flocks. It was time something was done, and a battue was decided on for the following day.

Our host showed us on the night of our arrival a snare which had that day been prepared, in the hope of catching one of these nightly visitors. It was a mere hole dug in the ground, just deep enough to prevent the animal from jumping out, and was concealed by a light covering of brambles.

A most fearful noise awakened me, in what seemed the middle of the night, though it must have been towards morning; and it was some time before it occurred to me that it emanated from the throat of a lion, which had undoubtedly fallen into the trap; and, as I lay and listened, I could make out that the roaring was responded to from farther off. It was impossible to sleep again, as the howls continued; and, as soon as it began to grow light, I dressed and joined some of the men, who were

evidently on their way to look at their imprisoned enemy. There, sure enough, was a magnificent lioness, who lashed her sides with her tail, and looked hungrily at us as she bounded from side to side of her prison. There was so much power in every movement of the beautiful, lithe creature, that at first I could not avoid shrinking back with a shudder.

"Fancy playing mouse to that great cat," said Hugh's voice in my ear; for he and Guy had joined us. "It would pretty soon be all up with you, wouldn't it?"

This gave one a very different idea of the power of these creatures from that ensuing on a visit to the Zoological Gardens. On my first visit to the Zoo, I remember being very much disappointed in the lions, which were not half what I expected; but no one who has not been lion-hunting can imagine the difference between those poor, confined, tamed things and this active, powerful, graceful creature, which lashed itself into a fury as it sprang up in a vain endeavour to get at us or to make its escape. We saw it despatched then and there.

We had returned to the house, and were at breakfast, when a man came in, pale and trembling, to say that he had been on his way to a farm not far off, when he had come across two lions apparently asleep in the road, scarcely a quarter of an hour before. He had come back at once, taking the greatest care not to disturb their slumbers, no doubt, or he would not have been there.

Horses were speedily saddled, and we reached the place the man had indicated, to find that the animals had gone, though the fresh traces showed that they had not vacated the place many minutes. We dismounted, to try and discover which direction they had taken, when we saw evidently the very two emerge from amongst some trees. They were splendid specimens, and the chief judged them to be about five years of age. Catching sight of us, they stood still for a few seconds, then turned and disappeared into a thicket of trees and shrubs.

Hugh and Guy looked all excitement, and I felt my heart beat fast, but not with fear.

Our host, seeing that we were all impatient to pursue, turned to me, for he could speak a little French, and we understood each other pretty well.

"It would be madness, with so small a party," he said. "But wait a minute."

He said a few words to one of the men who had accompanied us, and who now galloped off in the way we had come.

We waited and waited, until Guy Gee had almost lost his temper, for we were obliged to be guided by our host's wishes under existing circumstances; but at last we were surrounded by a hundred or more of Arab beaters, of whom more than half were armed with sticks and hatchets!

When I saw these men descend into the ravine where the lions had taken refuge, and penetrate into the thicket, I was horrified at their audacity—quite unnecessarily, as I afterwards found, as they are given to taking pretty good care of themselves.

Of course, during our preparations, the animals had had time to get a good bit ahead, and we followed their tracks for two hours without ever coming

near them. At last we caught sight of them some distance before us, just as they entered a little wood where the trees were thick and close, and it was difficult to get along.

"It would be very dangerous," said the chief, drawing rein, "to attempt to follow them there, for you cannot see for the smallest way round you, and may have a ball hit you by accident, or put one into some one else; or while you are occupied with one beast, the other may be upon you before you are aware of him."

"What would you advise, then?" asked Vulliamy.

"That we return and try elsewhere," was the reply. "If we fail to find a lion, a wild boar may do instead."

"Botheration!" said Guy to me. "I wish we had obtained some beaters, and come independently. It does seem a cowardly trick to run away after following them so far."

I looked back at the dark and gloomy thicket, and could not help owning inwardly that the Arab was right. It was very disappointing; but lions seemed to be plentiful, and we had to console ourselves with the hope of another.

We soon reached a ravine somewhat resembling the last, with sloping, rocky sides; along each side ran a sort of natural platform, and on one of these Guy and I found ourselves, followed by some fourteen or fifteen of the Arabs, armed with guns, while opposite us were Vulliamy and our host, with the rest of the men who carried fire-arms.

The beaters were down in the hollow between us, and began their work. For an hour we followed the course of the ravine without any result, and I was beginning to feel slightly fatigued, when the report of a gun from the opposite side put us on the alert. The bushes were too high for us to see over, and, as the beaters had given no sign, I asked some of the Arabs whether they thought it could be a lion that had been fired at. The answer was a negative movement, for I only knew a word or two of their language, and, none of those who followed us speaking French, I could not gain any further information.

Under these circumstances, Gee and I continued to advance, and a minute after there was another shot. Our horses began to tremble and snort, refusing to go on, and at last I thought we must be near the game we sought.

"By Jove!" cried Guy, "look here, Sid. All those cowardly Arabs have cut their sticks."

I looked round, and, instead of being followed by a little party of armed men, to my astonishment there was not one in sight.

"Where are they?"

"Up in the trees behind us," said Guy. "Well, I don't see where the danger lies; but perhaps we had better follow their example."

I had dismounted with the intention of taking this advice, when right before us a huge lion bounded out of a thicket of lentisk trees, his skin streaked with blood—for he was wounded—and his terrible fangs disclosed in a savage snarl.

He caught sight of us, and came straight for me, whereupon I lost all presence of mind. No doubt, I ought to have awaited his advance, taken aim be-

tween the eyes, and fired at five paces off; but I must be a great coward, for I did no such thing.

"Run, Guy!" I shouted; and I dropped down behind my horse, which remained motionless, paralyzed with terror.

Then followed a few minutes of suspense, a terrific, deafening roar, a shot, and I felt a shock that extended me on the ground. I believe I was unconscious for a minute; but as soon as I recovered myself I sat up and looked round, feeling sick and giddy. Neither lion nor horse was visible. A little way off, I saw two or three Arabs peering from among the branches of a tree down into the ravine. A motionless figure, face downwards on the ground, next attracted my attention, and my heart sank as I saw it was Guy. I rose staggeringly to my feet, when the Arabs signed to me energetically to follow their example. However, I would not do so without seeing how it fared with my poor friend; for I felt that if he were dead I should never forgive myself for my loss of courage. I knelt down by his side, and laid my hand on his shoulder, to turn him over.

"Guy, old fellow."

"Hallo!" he said, springing up, rather white, but apparently as whole and sound as ever he was in his life. "Here, come and let's get up a tree!"

We were speedily ensconced in the branches of a tree, and as soon as we were safe, he looked at me and laughed.

"That was rather narrow, wasn't it? But I say, Sid, are you hurt?"

"No, I think not," I said, rather doubtfully, for I was still confused and misty in my ideas.

I heard from Guy afterwards what had taken place during those few minutes, after I took shelter behind my horse.

He had dismounted at the same time, when the poor terrified animal snatched the reins from his grasp, and galloped off. He saw the lion appear, as if about to spring on my horse, and, keeping his presence of mind far better than I had done, he took aim; but before he could fire, at one and the same instant my horse backed suddenly, and threw me full length on the ground, while the lion, changing his attention, made for Guy.

He saw it in the act of springing, fired, and, missing, threw himself face downwards on the earth, when the animal went quite over him, was greeted by shots from the surrounding trees, and again took refuge in the ravine. Not feeling sure that the creature was not still at hand, waiting for any sign of life on his part, Guy lay still till I touched him.

It was some time before any one would venture go and explore in search of the lion, though we knew the poor wretch must be either dead or dying, considering the way he had been peppered. At last Guy slipped to the ground, and hastily loaded his gun.

"I'm going," he said; "come along, Sid. We'll go alone if every one else is afraid."

In an instant our host joined us, and he was soon followed by a number of the others. We found the noble beast lying quite dead at the bottom of the ravine. The chief presented Guy with the skin, as a token of his admiration for his courage, when we parted from him, with many expressions of regret, a week later.

How Gold is Found.

BY A GOLD DIGGER.

GOLD, the mammon of unrighteousness, the dust that blinds all eyes, and the dross of those who have plenty and never worked for it, is found under very peculiar circumstances. Sometimes it is literally picked up like young potatoes, and quite as large, a foot below the surface; but this is only in a few favoured spots, and when the digger must be content to get either nuggets or nothing. Practically, however, gold is found in dust, grains, and occasionally nuggets. I have got it at times sticking to the sides of a prospecting dish like paint—a sight to make a golden-haired belle burst her “pull-back” with envy. But let us “roll-up” and be off to the new rush, and see if we can get on to some sort of a show. The first thing after pitching your tent is to take a look round, and try to find out the most likely-looking spot to sink. This not unfrequently is a matter of divided opinion, and one in which theory and geological study, unaided by practical experience, will be found worse than useless. Here let me remark on the utter inutility of a merely theoretical knowledge unsupported by practical test. The best proof of this is so often realized by the ridiculous absurdities of geologists that have been brought to light after the gold has been traced.

It is generally the rule to get as near the original prospectors as possible, but, assuming that the spot is selected, the first thing is to peg out your claim. This is done by driving four posts into the ground, each one being three inches in diameter and three feet above the surface, marked at the foot with an “L” trench to show the direction of the claim, their distance from each other being regulated by the number of shareholders in each claim. Thus, three men’s ground would be 180 by 180 feet on the block. The ground being secured by virtue of the aforesaid pegs, and possession of the legal title—to wit, “miners’ rights”—nothing remains but to commence sinking the shaft; and now all the romance and arm-chair novel method of getting gold is stripped of its brilliant clothing, and stands revealed in the matter-of-fact and most prosaic drudgery of clay-stained moleskins, old flannel shirt, and linen cap.

The battle has commenced in man’s endeavour to unravel the secrets that are hidden in the great strong book of Nature. This is the beginning of the chapter, and here man is brought face to face with God in the mystery of creation; and the end of the first lesson is arrived at as he stands on the bed of a dead river, amidst the silent wreck of a voiceless world.

“Very pretty, no doubt, mate; but what did that last prospect go?” So I descend from my Parnassus to the practical logic of the moment, to whose query the satisfactory reply of “A grain” announces the fact that it will pay. All this is just as clear as mud to the uninitiated reader, who very naturally wants to know how a grain of gold found in a tin dish is going to be made to pay. Well, my friend, you must accompany me in the spirit of investigation to the bottom of the shaft that has just been sunk, minus your bell-topper, because the roof of the drive

is only four feet high, and new hats and micaceous sandstone don’t fraternize very readily. Now, being safely landed, all you have to do is to look around while I endeavour to clear away the haziness that has beclouded your perception. On every side you are surrounded by wash-dirt—that is to say, earth carrying gold all through it, and three feet in depth. Several tin prospecting dishes of this earth have been washed, which each yielded a grain of gold. These are termed prospects, and by them the digger can form a pretty correct idea of what it will go to the load, a grain to the dish being considered equal to five pennyweights to the former. This, with water handy and the “stuff” easily got, and plenty of it, will pay good wages, and very likely leave a surplus.

This is very plain-sailing so far, and many a digger would consider himself fortunate to drop upon something of this kind with so little trouble. As a contrast, it will be my endeavour to show the kind of labour that has to be gone through in order to reach the gold, or, to speak technically, before the shaft is bottomed.

The greatest enemy to a miner is water, and yet he cannot get the metal without it, the difference being when it is met with in sinking. When this is the case, two most important questions have to be decided. Firstly, the pecuniary circumstances of the men engaged; and, secondly, the position of the claim in relation to their chances of striking the lead or supposed run of gold. Taken collectively, it is a matter of profit and loss; but “let’s take a smoke over it.” The practical philosophy of this suggestion is at once carried out, and the consultation begins under a cloud, and ends, alas! like too many such cases, in the loss of time, money, and labour in a determined but fruitless endeavour to subjugate this dread foe, which in the majority of the cases leads to the abandonment of the claim—*sic transit gloria mundi*. Scarcely a less-feared opponent is a fine, white shifting sand, which has a kindred relationship to water—a sort of half-brother, with a drier temperament. This is more frequently met with in diamond drifts, descriptive articles on which have been repeatedly published. This sand has an insinuating way of intruding itself through every possible and impossible crevice, like the sand in an hour-glass multiplied into years. Close slabbing will do in some instances, but not unfrequently boxes have to be made, open at both ends, and fitted into the shaft with the nicest accuracy. This latter precaution generally boxes it up in a double sense. Unlike water, however, it cannot be utilized, for what to the individual miner is an almost insurmountable obstacle is to the mining company a source of profit, by which they can benefit very greatly—viz., by pumping the water out of the shaft into a dam, thereby answering the double purpose of conserving the water, to be afterwards used for washing the auriferous earth, and emptying the shaft at the same time. But this only applies to grand companies, who have costly machinery, with managers, directors, secretaries, bankers, and lawyers. The last get the gold, while the “promoters” take it out in scrip. But as I am only dealing with working diggers, who are not

accustomed to the society of swell companies—fortunately for them (the miners)—I believe I have shown that these two elements of water and sand are what is colonially termed a terror to the generality of diggers. Another hard-featured monster is rock. This is generally met with in what are termed “made bills,” and has to be overcome by the industrious influence of powder, gad, drill, and pick, which are all kept in active requisition day and night. In some cases, however, it can be jointed out, or rather disjointed, when the appearance of the shaft under these circumstances is strongly suggestive of the time-worn columns of some vast old cathedral.

Thus, it will be seen, I have attempted to dispose of three of the principal difficulties that the digger has to contend with. Yet are the impediments by no means exhausted, but it cannot enter into an article of this description to enumerate them—not the least among them being foul air. Space forbids it.

As to the conditions under which gold can be profitably worked, they are now, alas! very few. I use the word “profitably” advisedly; in proof of which I may mention that in the sister colony of Victoria alone there has been a decrease of 17,000 miners within the last eight years; but what would be termed payable gold is liable to a great many constructions. In some parts of California and the western slopes of the Pacific two grains to the load would pay by means of hydraulic sluicing; in this colony (New South Wales) the question of what would be payable is open to considerable latitude, such as the depth and width of the wash-dirt, distance from water, and the number of men in a claim, &c. Taken at a rough calculation, seven penny-weights to the load, with three feet of wash-dirt, and water within a convenient distance, would be considered payable for three men. In these times a man may deem himself fortunate if he can knock out a fair living or a safe thirty shillings a week; but there are very few who average this amount, the great majority scarcely half—by the term average I mean every week throughout the year.

In the good old times gold was found in such quantities at Ballarat and Bendigo that the store-keepers would only give 30s. an ounce for it. The highest price obtained within the last three or four years was at the Palmer River diggings, in Northern Queensland, where it is worth £4 3s. an ounce; but the standard price at the Sydney Mint is £3 17s. 10d.

The daily routine of a digger's life is very primitive, and quite Arcadian in its simplicity. “Early to bed and early to rise” is the orthodox mode, although the wealth that is generally supposed to be the result of such a proceeding is still at a considerable discount amongst men who have followed this plan for the last twenty years, while the wisdom still remains in the same doubtful haziness. As regards the health, a man who has to exist off fourteens a day, and earn it, is not likely to be troubled much with either gout or dyspepsia.

The years go by with the same unvarying monotony (it is nearly eight years since I saw a brick house), occasionally relieved by a little amusement at Christmas; within the last few months, however,

a cricket club has been established, which, up to the present time, has come off best in every match hitherto played. Let “W. G.” of Downend look to his laurels.

The conclusion with regard to gold mining is this, that it is not a profitable pursuit; the lucky digger is a thing of the past, although you may come across a rich “reefer.” Those people who still continue to search for hidden treasures are men of means who hold shares in quartz reefs, and have little or nothing to do with alluvial. What exists of the latter is slowly but steadily declining, a mere remnant of an expiring industry, the closing life of worn-out nature, which, after yielding over £200,000,000 of the yellow metal within the last twenty-seven years, says it is enough, and is quietly dying a natural death. Its epitaph is written, and all that will shortly be left of this great god may be traced by the hand of time upon the tombstone of nature in one word: in letters of gold it shall be inscribed, “Exhaustion.”

The race is not always to the swift, nor charity to honest poverty, yet, notwithstanding the toil, privation, hardship, and frequent bitter disappointments that are the never-failing attendants of a digger's life, in their struggle to wrest the gold from the earth, in the face of grim poverty, through sickness and disease, in accidents oft, until even the portals of death are sometimes reached—having at length overcome all these obstacles, and met at last the long-coveted success, they find it seven times harder to keep the treasure than to get it; and many an unhappy digger has ere now found out to his sorrow that the tears of sensibility have salted many a claim.

GEORGE STUCKEY.

Two Mile Flat, N. S. W.

A Day's Fishing.

LIKE Peter of old, I once went a-fishing. Well, perhaps more than once, but this time it was on the River Thames; and in my modesty of desire I blushed at the size of the landing-net placed in the punt by my fisherman. I foresaw the catching of no fish so large that I could not pull it out by rod and line. This landing-net would have fished out a cod.

It was evident to me one day, however, not long since, that the men of Sheffield were troubled by no such feelings of modesty, as I mingled with a party bound eastward to compete in a fishing match.

The morning was wet. Mackintoshes and the shabbiest umbrellas I have seen out of a mender's hands were in vogue. Each man carried a carefully-bound up sheaf of joints to make up a rod or rods; a square-topped basket was slung over his shoulder, containing his tackle, provender, and ground bait, and was ready to hold his fish—when caught; and looming over all was a good, full-bodied landing-net. There was no bashfulness—none of that shamefacedness which makes disciples of Izaak Walton in London conceal their weakness for the gentle art by the use of pocket fishing-rods, or those known as the walking-stick. All was open and above board; and we started by rail, in the full anticipation of getting wet, if we caught no fish.

For were we not going to compete for six prizes, the largest being £12, and the smallest £1, with an addition of a number of minor prizes, not in money, to act as consolation to those whose weight of fish did not attain to a sufficiency to ensure the cash? Talking of cash, our entrance tickets for leave to compete were half-a-crown, and the railway company supplied us with cheap return tickets, and picked up friends at various stations on the way to Crowle Wharf on the Keadby Canal, a favourite ground for fishing matches—for does not the water contain pike, perch, roach, bream, tench, eels, chub, gudgeon, &c.? For the “&c.” read ruffs and barbot or eel pouts. The former are objectionable little fish, like a perch suffering from the measles, and the eel pout a capital eating fish, that seems to have been Dame Nature's first attempt to form an eel, so short and fat and like to those mud-loving creatures is the barbot. Then, apparently dissatisfied, a pull at the head and tail extended the creature into an eel.

The fish to be caught were eagerly discussed in the compartment where we were, and an elderly man, evidently a fisherman to the back-bone, caught my eye, looked me all over, and at last said—

“You don't belong to these parts?”

I replied that I did not, but was ready to go anywhere to get good fishing.

“Then you should hev gone another gate, man,” he said, “for thou wean't get it here.”

Then we fell to and talked about the Keadby Canal and the old River Dun. I gave my experience of its contents, and he gave his, in all the freemasonry of brother anglers; and we agreed that though tench, chub, and gudgeon might exist there, we had never caught them, nor seen them caught. Then a man, who proved to be a grinder, and who seemed as if he kept his hair down by holding it occasionally against the stone, so short and stubby was it, joined in the conversation, and opined that the fishing had fallen off of late years, and said he was sure those chaps in the keels used nets as they went up and down. Then another wondered whether the great pike that had been seen about Thorne had ever been caught—the one that lay at the top of the water, like a log—and said he should like to hev hold of that chap. And so other famous pike were discussed; for wherever there is water containing pike, there is sure to be one famous fish that everybody has seen, many have hooked, but which always escapes with a fresh supply of hooks, traces, and gimp, till he has carried off enough to stock a small tackle shop, and carry on a respectable trade down below. It is wonderful what weights are attributed to those pike, which are never caught to put their ponderosity to the proof, and many were the anecdotes we told of similar fish. I'm afraid that my Yorkshire fishing friends set me down as a great liar when I said that I had seen a pike that weighed over forty pounds, and the old fisherman said, “That's a whopper,” but whether he meant my story or the fish I cannot say. Several in the compartment winked, but seemed more disposed to believe when I told them that it was obtained by draining a lake. But the good impression was swept away when, in a fit of rashness, I asserted the fact that I

once fairly caught, when live-baiting, a pike that scaled twenty-five pounds next day.

“That's a whopper, too,” said the old fisherman, with a stolid look, and there was another wink round.

“Thou'lt catch no five-and-twenty pounders here to-day, lad,” said a man in the corner; and I assented.

And then there was a general display of tackle: men pulled out boxes of maggots, and bags of worms, boiled barley and rice, grains, and other tempting messes to entice the fish. One had his paste mixed with sugar, another with gin; and the old fisherman had some very peculiar oil that was given him as a secret by his father, and warranted to tempt the fish into biting at any time and place.

“He means first prize,” said the grinder, with a laugh.

And, as he spoke, the train, which had been crawling along the winding bank of the canal with that piece of water on the right, and a great drain on the left—both admirable places for an accident—drew up at Crowle Wharf Station, in the midst of the warp land, where such famous crops of lints or flax and potatoes grow.

There were, of course, the necessary mugs of beer to be drunk, and then each man, according to his number, had to go to a peg driven into the bank so many yards from his neighbour on either side; and he was given to understand that if he fished elsewhere than in his own water, changed with a neighbour, or in any other way broke the rules laid down for his guidance and for the insurance of fair fishing, he would be disqualified and unable to compete for the prizes. In other respects the rules were very simple: the highest prize to go to the man who obtained the greatest weight of fish, caught fairly with his own rod—any kind—would take the first prize; and the others in proportion.

For a few minutes the bank of the canal was a scene of confusion, but in an incredibly short space of time every man was in his place, rods were being put together, ground bait thrown in, with plashing enough to drive every fish away; and then very rapidly lines were fixed, bait placed on hooks, and the smooth surface of the water was speckled with floats. Some men had evidently come out for a day's fun, and noisily shouted to their neighbours, leaving their rods to fish for themselves, while they went hither and thither to talk to friends, or sat and smoked. Others, again, were intent upon gaining one of the prizes, and, growling at the restless ones, settled down upon their baskets, and fished with all the patience of the craft, and that patience is great. Rods were stretched over the water as great in variety as were the floats, which ran from the attenuated porcupine quill up to the fattest of blue and white corks, some of which never gave a bob the whole day long, except when an envious drop of rain larger than the rest fell pat upon its top and made it shake. For the day seemed to have set in for a soaker; the path was muddy, the sedge at the water-side, like the long grass, soaked, and all looked cold and grey and dismal as the now speckled and pitted water. Umbrellas dripped, and the umbrellaless sat and shone as the water ran off their water-

proof coats. The inspectors who "saw fair" went from man to man, to see that no tricks were played by those who felt sure of gaining no prize, and gave their fish to more successful friends; but the duties of these inspectors were for some time very light, as not a fish was caught.

At last there was a little excitement; one man caught a roach about six inches long, and another a few pegs away secured what he declared to be a Tommy Ruff, and held the little spotted object up by his tail. But, small as he was, he was too valuable to be lightly cast aside. A dozen such fish might mean a minor prize, so the ruff was deposited in the basket, and the hook rebaited with maggot or wig-tail worm, though no one wore down his teeth, as the Chicago paper says the fishermen in the West are wont to do, by biting in two the gritty worm. Then some forty yards away another roach was caught, and another, and another, at long and weary intervals, but all of tiny size; while the hours glided on, and one went from place to place to watch the rather tedious work.

Suddenly a thrill of excitement ran along the line of fishers, for the news was telegraphed from peg to peg that "Some 'un had howd of a big 'un." I did not know "Some 'un," but found him to be a white-faced, closely-shaven man, with a kind of knife-blade look about him; and he was playing a goodly-sized fish, which, after a good deal of fuss, turned upon its side, and allowed itself to be drawn over the meshes of the landing net; and the next minute a bream of about a pound weight lay on the grass, the centre of a little admiring crowd. "Some 'un" smiled grimly, and carefully basketed his prize, baited and threw in again, to be watched by a knot of unlucky ones, who were rewarded by seeing him soon catch another half the size, and then went either way to announce that "Some 'un" was sure to take the first prize. Farther along the canal there were men patiently fishing in absolute peace; but, all the same, they never seemed to have a single bite, while noisy, careless fellows, without an atom of the true angler's art, were successful, and now and then landed a fish of small size, losing many more, though, than they caught.

The rain still came down, though the fish bit charily, after evidently having been warned by the noise upon the bank of the mischief Sheffield and All England meditated against their peace; but, all the same, thoughtless ones were caught, and the eyes of some of the patient fishers glistened as they felt their baskets grow a trifle heavier. It was but a trifle, though; for no good take could possibly ensue amidst the noise and trampling on the bank. At last refreshment seemed to be in vogue, and many a fisherman began to partake of the sturdy sandwiches and wedges of pork pie lying in company with various baits in the depths of the baskets; and it may be squeamishness and a too great particularity, but to one's own ideas it seems as if it would be better for him who has been placing worms on a hook to wash his hands before holding a lump of bread and meat in his fingers. But then, some folks are squeamish to a degree.

Feeding at an end, drinking and smoking ensued; but the fish would not bite. There were rumours of

heavy takes, but the heaviness never reached to three pounds, as I judged, and as the weighing-machine said two and a half, when the time was up and the managers went round to weigh each man's fish, and dozens and dozens having no fish to weigh; but, none the less, they seemed to enjoy that day, and shouted, and cheered, and chaffed their more fortunate competitors. Next followed an adjournment to the inn by the wharf, and a serious consumption of fluids, before the train crawled slowly up, and baskets, rods, and satchels were seen chattering in the carriage-doors, as their owners scrambled for a place, to get back to the old, smoky town, ready to discuss the various successes of the day as well as the want of luck. The prizes were to be distributed at a well-known inn the next day; but I had no prize to take, and failed to go. But, all the same, if it had been a fine day—if there had been more fish—if they would have bitten—if the anglers had been less noisy—the carriages better—the way less far—some of the company more choice, and better anglers—that would have been a day always to be remembered. As it is, it cannot be set down as one of the pleasantest that can be recalled. All the same, it was a very innocent day's outing of those who take an interest in Mr. Mundella's Bill, which, by the way, might just as well include a clause to fine those who stoop to cheating in an angling match.

Market Culture of Lavender.

ALTHOUGH lavender will grow freely, and bloom profusely on soils of a widely different character, its cultivation for commercial purposes is confined to an area of comparatively small extent. There are plantations in Herts and Cambridgeshire; but by far the largest proportion of the flowers that are sent annually to the distilleries are produced in Surrey, in the district of which Mitcham may be considered the centre.

Formerly the lavender plantations of Surrey were confined to the parish of Mitcham, but of late years, to keep pace with the requirements of the manufacturers, it has been found necessary to considerably extend the area, and plantations of vast extent are now to be met with in Beddington, Wallington, Sutton, and Carshalton; and it is computed that in this district there are at least 300 acres under lavender.

It is now about eighteen years since the first plantations were formed in Beddington, and from thence the culture has extended to the adjoining parishes, particularly those on the south and west; and in passing at the present time through the lanes or foot-paths that intersect the fields, the eye is attracted on all sides by the broad sheets of colour. Lavender culture now forms an industry of no small importance to the district, and will in all probability undergo still further extension; for it is certainly not likely that the produce of the Mitcham fields will be supplanted by that from any other part of the country.

To fully understand why it is that the cultivators in Surrey are so well able to hold their own against growers in other counties, it must be remembered

that flowers borne by plants grown on dry soils and in warm situations yield, by distillation, an essential oil of much finer quality than that obtained from flowers produced by plants on soils containing a superabundance of moisture, and in situations that are not particularly warm. The presence of calcareous matters in the soil appears also to exercise a very material influence upon the quality of the essential oil, and at Mitcham we find a good depth of loam, somewhat "holding" in texture and resting upon a bed of chalk, and climatical conditions of a highly favourable character.

The common lavender, *Lavandula vera*, is the species grown in the Mitcham and other districts, as the oil yielded by its flowers, although not so large in bulk as that produced by the flowers of *Lavandula spica*, is of much finer quality, and is alone employed in the manufacture of the finest perfumes. The oil obtained from the last-mentioned of the two species is rather green in colour, and is commonly known as spike oil, or foreign oil of lavender. It is chiefly used for painting; but a considerable quantity finds its way every year to the second-class manufactories, where lavender water and other perfumes, of which the base is the essential oil of lavender, are prepared, and this in its turn is sometimes adulterated with spirits of turpentine.

The harvesting of the flowers takes place at the end of July or the beginning of August, according to the season, the proper moment for cutting the spikes being just as the flowers are opening, as they are then more powerfully aromatic, and consequently yield an oil of greater value than when fully expanded. The cutting is done with the sickle, and every care taken to immediately pack and tie up in mats, for when exposed to the rays of the sun for any length of time after cutting, the yield of oil is materially reduced in consequence. The flowers cannot, indeed, be sent to the distillery too quickly after their removal from the plants.

Large quantities of lavender flowers are sent to Covent Garden annually, and from thence find their way to the shops and costers' barrows, for there is still a demand for them for filling muslin bags to stow away in drawers and cupboards, notwithstanding the facilities which exist for obtaining the essential oil, and lavender water and other perfumes into which it enters. The flowers, it should be remembered, are put into drawers and wardrobes as an antidote to moths, as well as for imparting an agreeable odour to the articles placed in these receptacles. A few drops of the oil will, however, serve the same purpose; and it has been ascertained by experiment that if a single drop is placed in a small box along with a living insect, the insect will be killed almost immediately.

The distillation of the flowers is a business quite distinct from that of their production, and both large and small growers take their crops to the distillery, and pay a certain rate per ton. The quantity of oil extracted from a ton of lavender varies according to the season, a rather dry and hot summer being the most favourable to an abundant production. From 15 lbs. to 16 lbs. is considered a fair average; but in favourable seasons not more than 10 lbs. of oil is obtained from a ton of lavender, and in some years

it reaches 20 lbs., but not often. The distilling commences about August 1, and is continued until the end of September or the middle of October, according to the extent of the crop. This is considered as being a good year, for, owing to the abundance of moisture in the early part of the season, a vigorous growth was made, and the spikes pushed up strongly in consequence; and the warm, dry weather which has prevailed of late has been favourable to the development of the flowers.—*Gardener's Magazine*.

AN enterprising farmer, always on the watch for information—indeed, an enthusiast in his profession—ordered a new book styled "Rain upon the Mown Grass," and found it was—sermons.

A LARGE SALMON.—The salmon fishers at Macduff have landed a salmon weighing 55½ lbs., and measuring in length 4 ft. 3 in., and girth 29½ in. The fish is the largest landed there for many years.

"Is there anything that will make grain come up quick?" asked a rich amateur farmer of an old husbandman. "Well, no, I don't know of nothin' that will do it," was the genial old fellow's reply, "unless it be rooks." Then the amateur farmer wanted to know where he could get some.

DANGER OF WATER.—An old toper who had attended the Polytechnic, where a learned professor caused several explosions to take place from the gases produced from water, said: "You don't catch me putting water in my liquor after this. I had no idea that water was so dangerous, though I never liked to take much of it."

COLD.—Fitz Hugh Ludlow, in his narrative of travel in "The Heart of the Continent," tells of an eccentric genius who improved on the old yarn to the effect that "the weather would have been colder if the thermometer had been longer," by saying he had been where "it was so cold that the thermometer got down off the nail."

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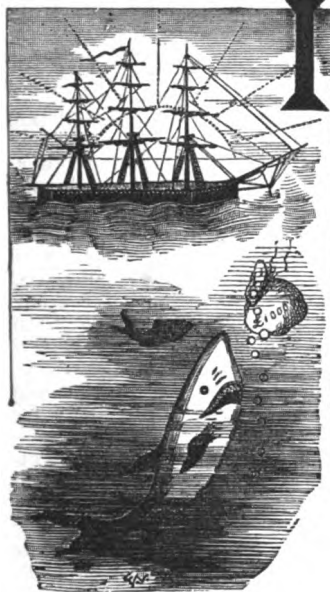
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And Manchester and Liverpool.

Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.—THE DIVER'S OFFICE.



ISAY, Rasp. Confound the man! Rasp, will you leave that fire alone? Do you want to roast me?"

"What's the good o' you saying will I leave the fire alone, Mr. Pug?" said the man addressed, stoking savagely at the grate; "you know as well as I do that if I leave it half nouri you never touches it, but lets it go out."

Half a scuttle of coals poured on.

"No, no. No more coals, Rasp."

"They're on now, Mr. Pug," said Rasp, with a grim grin. "You know how the governor grumbles if the fire's out, and it's me as ketches it."

"The office is insufferably hot now."

"Good job, too; and it's cold enough outside, I can tell you; and there's a draught where I sits, just as if you'd got yer ear up again the escape-valve of the air pump."

"Get a screen, then," said the first speaker, impatiently, as he scratched his thick, curly, crisp brown hair with the point of a pair of compasses, and gazed intently at a piece of drawing-paper pinned out upon the desk before him.

"Screen? Bah! What do I want wi' screens? I can stand wind and cold, and a bit o' fire, too, for the matter o' that. I aint like some people."

"Hang it all, Rasp, I wish you'd go," said the first speaker. "You see how busy I am. What's the matter with you this morning? Really, you're about the most disagreeable old man I ever knew."

"Disagreeable? Old?" cried Rasp, seizing the poker and inserting it in the bars for another good stoke at the office fire, when the compasses were banged down on the desk, their owner leaped off the stool, twisted the poker out of the stoker's hand, and laughingly threw it down on the fender.

"I'll get Mr. Parkley to find you a post somewhere as fireman at a furnace," said the first speaker, laughing.

"I don't want no fireman's places," growled Rasp. "How'd the work go on here wi'out me? Old, eh? Disagreeable, eh? Fifty aint so old, nayther; and

just you wear diving soots for thutty year, and get your head blown full o' wind till you're 'most ready to choke, and be always going down, and risking your blessed life, and see if you wouldn't soon be disagreeable."

"Well, Rasp, I've been down pretty frequently, and in as risky places as most men of my age, and it hasn't made me such an old crab."

"What, you? Bah! Nothing putts you out—nothing makes you cross 'cept too much fire, and you do get waxey over that. But you try it for thutty year—thutty year, you know, and just see what you're like then, Mr. Pug."

"Confound it all, Rasp," cried the younger man, "that's the third time in the last ten minutes that you've called me Pug. My name is Pugh—P U G H—Pugh."

"Taint," said the old fellow, roughly. "I aint lived fifty year in the world, and don't know how to spell. P E W spells *few*, and P U G H spells *pug*, with the H at the end, and wi'out it, so you needn't tell me."

"You obstinate old crab," said the other, good-humouredly, as he stopped him from making another dash at the poker. "There, be off, I'm very busy."

"You allus are busy," growled the old fellow; "you'll get your brains all in a muddle wi' your figuring and drawing them new dodges and plans. No one thinks the better o' you, no matter how hard you works. It's my opinion, Mr. Dutch—there, will that suit yer, as you don't like to be called Mr. Pug?"

"There, call me what you like, Rasp, you're a good, brave, true old fellow, and I shall never forget what you have done for me."

"Bah! Don't talk stuff," cried the old fellow, snappishly.

"Stuff, eh?" said the other, laughing, as he took up his compasses, and resumed his seat. "Leave—that—fire—alone!" he cried, seizing a heavy ruler, and shaking it menacingly as the old fellow made once more for the poker. "And now, hark here—Mrs. Pugh says you are to come out to the cottage on Sunday week to dinner, and spend the day."

"Did she say that? Did she say that, Mr. Dutch?" cried the old fellow, with exultation.

"Yes, she wants to have a long chat with the man who saved her husband's life."

"Now, what's the good o' talking such stuff as that, Mr. Pug?" cried the old man, angrily. "Save life, indeed! Why, I only come down and put a rope round you. Any fool could ha' done it."

"But no other fool would risk his life as you did yours to save mine, Rasp," said the younger man, quietly. "But, there, we won't talk about it. It gives me the horrors. Now, mind, you're to come down on Sunday week."

"I aint comin' out there to be buttered," growled the old fellow, sourly.

"Buttered, man?"

"Well, yes—to be talked to and fussed and made much of by your missus, Master Dutch."

"Nonsense!"

"Taint nonsense. There, I tell you what, if she'll make a contract not to say a word about the

accident, and I may sit and smoke a pipe in that there harbour o' yourn, I'll come."

"Arbour at this time of year, Rasp?" laughed the younger man. "Why, it's too cold."

"What's that got to do wi' it. Just as if I couldn't stand cold. Deal better than you can heat."

"Then I shall tell her you are coming, Rasp. What would you like for dinner?"

"Oh, anything'll do for the likes o' me. I aint particular."

"No, but we may as well have what you like for dinner."

"Oh, I aint particular. Have just what you like. But if there was a bit o' tripe on the way I might pick a bit."

"Good!" said the other, smiling, "you shall have some tripe for dinner for one thing."

"Don't you get letting it be got o' purpose for me. Anything'll do for me—a bit o' sooty pudden, for instance."

"All right, Rasp. Tripe and suet pudding on Sunday week."

"If ever there was," said Rasp, thoughtfully, as he made an offer to get at the poker, "a woman as was made to be a beautiful angel, and didn't turn out to be one because they forgot her wings, that's your missus, Master Dutch."

"Thank you, Rasp, old fellow, thank you," said the young man, smiling; and his eyes brightened as he listened to this homely praise of the woman he worshipped.

"But what's a puzzle to me," continued the old fellow, with a grim chuckle, "is how she as is so soft, and fair, and dark-haired, and gentle, could take up with such a strong, broad-shouldered chap as you, Mr. Dutch."

"Yes, it was strange," laughed the young man.

"I should more like have expected to see you pair off wi' Captain Studwick's lass, Miss Bessy. Now, she's a fine gal, if you like."

"Yes, she's a fine, handsome girl, Rasp; and her father's very proud of her too."

"I should just think he ought to be," said Rasp. "Why, it's my belief if any chap offended her, she'd give him such a clap aside o' the head as would make his ears ring."

"I don't know about that, Rasp," laughed the other; "but I do believe whoever wins her will have a true-hearted Englishwoman for his wife."

"O' course he will, else she wouldn't be the skipper's lass. Bless her!—she's always got a nice, pleasant word to say to a man when she comes here with her father. He used to think you meant to make up to her, Master Dutch."

"Nonsense, man, nonsense!"

"Oh, but he did; and then this other affair come off. I never could understand it, though."

"Ah, it was a problem, eh?" laughed the younger man.

"For you aint good-looking, are you, sir?"

"Not at all, Rasp," laughed the other. "We should neither of us get the prize for beauty, eh, Rasp?"

"I should think not," said Rasp; "but I always was the ugliest man our way. I think she took to you because you were so straight, and stout, and strong."

"Perhaps so, Rasp."

"I've heerd say as the more gentle, and soft, and tender a woman is, the more she likes a fellow as is all big bone and muscle, so as to take care of her, you know. That must ha' been it, sir," continued the old fellow, chuckling, "unless she took a fancy to your name. Ho! ho! ho!"

"No, I don't think it was that, Rasp, my man," said the other, quietly.

"More don't I, sir; Dutch Pug. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Dutch Drayson Pugh, Master Rasp."

"Pug's bad enough," said the old fellow; "but Dutch! What did they call you Dutch for?"

"It was a whim of my father," said the other.

"My grandfather married a lady in Holland, and in memory of the alliance my father said—so I've often been told—that as I was a fair, sturdy little fellow, like a Dutch burgomaster in miniature, I should be called Dutch; and that is my name, Mr. Rasp, at your service."

"Well, you can't help it now, sir, any more than you can the Pug; but if it had been me I should have called myself Drayson."

"And seemed ashamed of the name my dear old father gave me, Rasp? No, I'm not the man for that," said Dutch, warmly.

"No, sir, you aint," said Rasp, in a more respectful tone, as he looked at the colour flaming up in the younger man's cheeks, and in his heart of hearts acknowledged that he was not such a bad-looking fellow after all; for, though far from handsome, he was bold, bluff, and Saxon of aspect, broad-shouldered, and evidently Herculean in strength, though from his deep build and fine proportions, in no wise heavy.

Now, on the other hand, Rasp was a decidedly plain man, rough, rugged, grizzled, and with eyebrows and whiskers of the raggedest nature possible. Their peculiar bristly quality was partaken of also by his hair, which, though cut short, was abundant; and though you might have brushed it to your heart's content, it was as obstinate as its owner, for it never lay in any direction but that it liked.

At this point Rasp, who was a favoured old servant of the firm in which Dutch Pugh held a confidential post, made another attempt to stoke the fire, was turned on his flank, and retreated, leaving the young man to busily resume the drawing of a plan for some piece of machinery.

It was a dark, gloomy-looking room, that in which he worked, for the one window opened upon the narrow street of the busy seaport of Ramwich; and a heavy, yellow fog hung over the town, and made the office look gloomy and full of shadow.

The place was fitted up as a private office, and near the window was placed one of those great double-sloped desks, so arranged that four people could stand, or sit upon the high leather-covered stools, and write at it at the same time. A wide level divided the two slopes, and this was dominated by brass rails, beneath which stood a couple of those broad, flat, pewter inkstands common in commercial offices, and which in this case it was Rasp's delight to keep clean.

There were other objects about the gloomy office,

though, upon which Rasp bestowed his time; for in three places, fitted on stands, and strapped to the wall to prevent their falling forward, were what looked at first sight, as they peered from the gloom, like so many suits of grotesque armour; for what light there was gleamed from the huge polished helmets, with their great brass latticed goggle glass eyes—whose crests were tubes, and ornamentation glistening rims and studs of copper. A nervous person coming upon them in the dark might easily have been startled, for, with a certain grim idea of humour, Rasp had by degrees so arranged them that they leaned forward in peculiarly life-like positions—the hand of one holding a copper lantern, another being in the act of striking with a massive hatchet, and the third holding a huge crowbar in a menacing mode.

Farther back in the gloom stood a strange-looking air pump; while in various directions, coiled and trailed like snakes, great lengths of india-rubber tubing, apparently in disorder, but really carefully kept ready for instant use, this being Rasp's special task, of which he was proud to a degree.

"This is a teaser," said Dutch to himself, after making sundry lines on the paper before him, and then pausing, compasses in one hand, pen in the other. "Valve A to close tube B—escape valve at A dash—small copper globe at B dash, as a reservoir, and—hum—ha—yes—to be sure, small stop-cock in the middle of the copper tube at H. That's it! I've got it at last."

"Of course you have—I knew you would," said a short, quick voice.

Dutch started, and turned sharply round, to confront the little, square-built man who had entered the office quietly, and stood peering over his shoulder.

"Ah, Mr. Parkley! I didn't hear you come in," said Dutch, smiling.

"Too busy over your work," said the new-comer, who seemed all hat and comforter, from between which peered a pair of keen, restless eyes. "I knew you'd work that out, Dutch, or else I shouldn't have given you the job. Dutch Pugh, I'd give something for your cleverness with pen and pencil. Look at me, sir, a man dragged up instead of brought up—a man who never signs his name, because he can't write decently—a man who can hardly read a newspaper, unless the type's big. Ignorant, ignorant to a degree—a man—"

"Of sound judgment, sir," said Dutch, interrupting him, "who from the power of his brain and long experience has suggested more improvements in hydraulic machinery than any of our greatest scientists, and who has not only originated and made this great business, but whose opinion is sought from everywhere in all great diving cases."

"Stuff—stuff—stuff, Dutch! I'm ashamed of my ignorance."

"And who is one of the wealthiest men in Ram-wich?"

"Gammon and flattery, Dutch, my lad," said the other, taking off his great hat, to place it jauntily on one of the diving helmets, and then returning into the light, with his great bald head shining, and his dark, restless eyes twinkling good-humouredly. "Here, catch hold of that," he continued, thrusting

one hand into his chest, and dragging out the fringed end of his white woollen comforter.

Dutch Pugh laid down his compasses, smiling, and took hold of the end of the comforter, when its wearer began slowly to turn round before the fire, as if he was being roasted, unwinding about three yards of comforter from his neck, and then giving a sigh of relief as he again went into the back part of the office, and hung the woollen wrap round one of the diver's necks.

"I've managed to make bread and cheese, Pugh—bread and cheese," he said, chuckling, as he came back, climbed upon a stool by that of his assistant, and sat with his hands on his knees. "Yes, bread and cheese; beef and horseradish. Pugh, how's the little wife?"

"Quite well, Mr. Parkley," said Dutch, smiling.

"That's right, bless her! Tell her I'm coming down to spend a Sunday soon."

"We shall only be too glad, sir," said Dutch, smiling. "When shall it be?"

"Soon, man; but not yet. Too busy. I've got this big job on," he continued, rubbing his bald head, which looked as if he had worn a diver's helmet till all the hair had been frayed off. "Oh, here's a letter."

For just then Rasp came into the office, not quietly like his master—who walked slowly and heavily, as if putting down boots with massive leaden soles, and seemed as if he were wading through deep water, and liable to get entangled amongst sunken rigging—but with a bang and a rush like a big wind, and even made the letter he held in his hand rustle as he held it out to Mr. Parkley, saying, with a surly snarl—

"Letter. Answer. Waiting."

Then, uttering a snort, he walked across to the diving suits, snatched off Mr. Parkley's hat, whisked off the comforter, and dabbed them both on a hat-peg close at hand; after which he took out a blue large check cotton pocket handkerchief, drew forward a set of short steps, and, growling as he did so, began to breathe on the bright copper, gave it a good polishing, and then went off to his den.

"See that?" said Mr. Parkley, nodding his head sideways at Rasp, as he went out—but not until he had seized the poker, rammed it between the bars with a scientific twist, and made the blaze go dancing up the chimney. "See that, Pugh? He's the real master here. He's a tyrant."

"Well, really, sir, he has his own way pretty well."

"Rare stuff, though, Pugh, my dear boy—rare stuff. That man's one you can always trust in any emergency. I'd leave my life in his hands at any time."

"I know that, sir," said Dutch, warmly. "He is as true as steel."

"Right, Pugh, my dear boy—right. But look here," he continued, thrusting a finger in the young man's button-hole, "I wish you would drop that 'sir' to me. I don't like it. I'm only a business fellow, and you've had the education of a gentleman, and I feel sometimes as if I ought to say 'sir' to you."

"My dear sir——"

"There you go again."

"Well, my dear Mr. Parkley, then, I have you to thank for so much kindness."

"Stuff! stuff! stuff!" cried the elder, laying his hand playfully on his mouth. "You came to me to help me, and I was to pay you for that help. Well, look here, Pugh, you've been no end of value to me, and get worth more every day. What I pay you is nonsense to what you are worth. Now, look here; in three months the current business year with me will be up, and I'm going to ask you to join me as junior partner."

"Mr. Parkley!" cried the young man, astounded, as his employer leaped off his stool, and took down and replaced his hat.

"Say no more," he cried; "I don't act without thinking, do I?"

"Never, sir."

"Then it's all right. Catch hold of this," he continued, handing the young man one end of the comforter, and then, tucking the other in under his waistcoat, he slowly wound himself up in it again, tapped the letter, and said—"Big job on here—I'm going to see them about it;" and then, lifting his feet in his peculiar way, he seemed to move out of the office as if he were under water, and the door closed behind him.

CHAPTER II.—GOLDEN PROMISES.

THE last words of his employer had such an effect upon Dutch Pugh that he leaped from his stool, and began to pace the office excitedly, for this was beyond his wildest dreams. Partner in such a business, where he knew that many thousands were netted every year! He could hardly believe it. At one moment he was all exhilaration, thinking of the delight it would afford his young wife; at the next, he felt a strange sensation of depression, as of coming trouble. It was as if the sunshine of his life had been crossed by a black shadow; and minute by minute this increased upon him, till he shuddered, started, and turned round, to glance uneasily about the office, as if expecting to see trouble there.

And then it seemed to him as if the three goblin-like figures were laughing and blinking at him weirdly, menacing him with crowbar and hatchet; and, as if in a dream for the next few moments, he seemed to see himself engaged in some dangerous diving experiment, and at the mercy of an enemy who sought his life, while his young wife pleaded for him and in vain.

It was all misty and strange; his brain was confused, and he could the next minute no more have analyzed this waking dream, or idealized the actors therein, than have flown; but there, for a few brief moments, was the impression upon him of coming trouble—trouble so horrible that it menaced his life and the honour of her he most dearly loved. That was the impression; but how, when, where, he could not comprehend.

"Am I going mad!" he exclaimed, dashing his hand to his forehead. "What an idiot I am!" he cried, with a forced laugh. "That old rascal has made the place like an oven, and the blood has flown to my head. There, only to think what trifles

will upset a man, and, if he is weak-minded, make him superstitious and fanciful. Some men would have really believed that a terrible calamity was about to befall them, when it was only——"

"Here's a gentleman to see you," said Rasp, barking out his words, and ushering in a stranger.

Dutch Pugh involuntarily started, for he seemed to be in the presence of a stranger, and yet somehow the face was familiar to him. It was that of an exceedingly handsome man of about thirty, who took off a soft sombrero hat, and loosened the folds of a heavy black cloak, one end of which was thrown over his shoulder. He was evidently a foreigner, for his complexion was of a rich creamy tinge, his crisp black hair curled closely round a broad, high forehead, his dark eyes glittered beneath straight black brows, his nose was slightly aquiline, and the lower part of his face was covered with a thick, silky, black beard.

As he loosened the cords of his heavy cloak with his carefully-gloved hand, Dutch Pugh saw that he was faultlessly dressed, and, as he smiled and showed his white teeth, he said in good English, but with a perceptible foreign accent—

"Mr. Parkley, I learn, is out. I address Mr. Pugh?"

"The same," said Dutch, who seemed fascinated by his look. "Will you take a chair?"

A cold chill came over the speaker as the visitor smiled and seated himself, but only to be succeeded by a feeling of suffocation; and for an instant his brain swam, and the dreamy feeling seemed about to return, but it passed off instantly, as, rousing himself, Dutch said—

"You will find this room too hot, perhaps. Shall I open—"

"Hot!" laughed the stranger, taking out a card and letter of introduction. "My dear sir, it is comfortable after your chilly streets. I am from Cuba, where we see the sun."

As he spoke he handed a card, upon which was printed—

"Señor Manuel Laure."

"You will open the letter?" he continued, passing the one he held in his hand. "No?"

"Mr. Parkley will be here shortly," said Dutch. "Would you prefer to see him?"

"Yes—no," said the stranger. "I should like to see him, but I am content to talk to you. You Englishmen are so intelligent, and those who sent me here told me that their fellow-countrymen would be ready to help my designs."

"May I ask what they are?" said Dutch, who began to feel suspicious of the stranger.

"Yes, for I shall betray nothing. First, am I right? Yes," he said, glancing round, and pointing at the diving suits, "I see I am right. You work under water—dive?"

"That is our business, and the making of apparatus."

"Apparatus? Oh, yes, I understand. Would you—would Mr. Parkley like to make a great fortune?"

"Not a doubt about it," said Mr. Parkley, entering, all hat and comforter. "How do?" he continued, bluffly, as the visitor rose and bowed, and

then scanned him searchingly, as hat and comforter were placed once more upon the diving suit.

"This is Mr. Parkley, the head of this establishment."

"I am delighted," said the stranger, raising his eyebrows, and half-closing his eyes. "Will you, then, read?"

"Thinks I don't look it, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley aside, as he took the letter handed him, opened it, glanced at the contents and superscription, and then handed it to Dutch.

"Sit down, sir," he said, sharply, as he perched himself on a stool, as jerkily as the stranger resumed his full of grace. "Read it aloud, Mr. Pugh."

Dutch still felt troubled; but he read, in a clear voice, the letter from a well-known English firm at Havana.

"DEAR SIR—The bearer of this, Señor Manuel Laure, comes to you with our earnest recommendation. He has certain peculiar projects that he will explain. To some people they would appear wild and visionary; but to you, with your appliances, they will doubtless appear in a very different light. He is a gentleman of good position here, and worthy of your respect. If you do not see fit to carry out his wishes, kindly place him in communication with some other firm, and do what you can to prevent his being imposed on.—Faithfully yours,

"ROBERTS AND MOORE.

"To Mr. Parkley, Ramwich."

"Glad to see you, sir," said Mr. Parkley, upon whom the letter wrought a complete change. "Good people, Roberts and Moore. Supplied them with a complete diving apparatus. So you've come over on purpose to offer me a fortune?"

"Yes," said the visitor, "a great fortune. You smile, but listen. Do I think you a child, sir? Ah, no. I do not tell you I want to make a great fortune for you only, but for myself as well."

"Of course," said Mr. Parkley, smiling, and showing in his manner how thoroughly business-like he was. "I thought that had to come."

"See here, sir— This Mr. Pugh is in your confidence?"

"Quite. Go on."

"See, then, I have travelled much, boating—yachting you would call it in England—all around the shores of the Great Gulf of Mexico. I know every island and piece of coast in the Carib Sea."

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley, drumming on the desk.

"I have made discoveries there."

"Mines?" said Mr. Parkley. "Not in my way."

"No, sir—better than mines; for the gold and silver are gathered and smelted—cast into ingots."

"Buried treasure, eh? Not in my way, sir—not in my way."

"Yes, buried treasure, Mr. Parkley; but buried in the bright, clear sea, where the sun lights up the sand and rocks below."

"Sea, eh? Well, that is more in our way. Eh, Pugh?"

"Read the old chronicles of the time, sir, two or three hundred years ago," said the Cuban, rising, with his eyes flashing, and his handsome face lit up by his glowing excitement, "and you shall find that

gold ships and plate ships—ships laden with the treasures of Mexico and Peru, taken by the Spaniards, were sunk here and there upon those wondrous coasts."

"Old women's tales," said Mr. Parkley, abruptly. "Cock-and-bull stories."

"I do not quite understand," said the Cuban, haughtily, "except that you doubt me. Sir, these are truths. I doubted first; but for five years in a small vessel I have searched the Carib Sea, and I can take you to where three ships have been wrecked and sunk—ships whose existence is only known to me."

"Very likely," said Mr. Parkley; "but that don't prove that they were laden with gold."

"Look," said the Cuban, taking from a pocket in his cloak a packet.

And, opening it out, he unwrapped two papers, in one of which was a small ingot of gold, in the other a bar of silver. They were cast in a very rough fashion, and the peculiarity that gave strength to the Cuban's story was that each bar of about six inches long was for the most part encrusted with barnacle-like shells and other peculiar sea growths.

"Hum! Could this have been stuck on, Pugh?" said Mr. Parkley, curiously examining each bar in turn.

"I think not, sir, decidedly," said Pugh. "Those pieces of metal must have been under water for a great length of time."

"You are right, Mr. Pugh," said the Cuban, whose face brightened. "You are a man of sound sense. They have been under water three hundred years."

He smiled at the young Englishman as he spoke, but the other felt repelled by him, and his looks were cold.

"How did you get those bars and ingots?" said Mr. Parkley, abruptly.

"From amongst the rotten timbers of an old galleon," said the Cuban.

"But where?"

"That is my secret. Thirty feet below the surface at low water."

"Easy depth," said Mr. Parkley, thoughtfully. "But why did you not get more?"

"Sir, am I a fish? I practised diving till I could go down with a stone, and stay a minute; but what is that? How could I tear away shell and coral, and hard wood, and sand, and stones? I find six such ingots, and I am satisfied. I seek for years for the place, and I know three huge mines of wealth for the bold Englishman who would fit out a ship with things like those"—pointing to the diving suits—"with brave men who will go down with bars, and stay an hour, and break a way to the treasure, and there load—load that ship with gold and silver, and, perhaps, rich jewels. Sir, I say to you," he continued, his face gradually glowing in excitement, "are you the brave Englishman who will fit out a ship and go with me? I say, make a written bond of agreement to find all we shall want in what you call apparatus and brave men. I show you the exact place. I take your ship to the spot to anchor, and then, when we get the treasures, I take half for myself, you take half for yourselves. Is it fair?"

"Yes, it sounds fair enough," said Mr. Parkley,

rubbing his nose with a pair of compasses. "What do you say, Pugh?"

"I hardly know what to say, sir. The project is tempting, certainly; but—"

"But it is a monstrous fortune," said the Cuban. "It is an opportunity that cannot come twice to a man. Do you hear? Great ingots of gold, and bars of silver. Treasures untold, of which I offer you half, and yet you English people are so cold and unmovable. Why, a Spaniard or a Frenchman would have gone mad with excitement."

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley, "but we don't do that sort of thing here."

"No," said the Cuban. "You are so cold."

"It takes some time to warm us, sir," said Dutch, sternly; "but when we are hot, we keep so till our work is done. Your Frenchman and Spaniard soon get hot, and are cold directly."

"That's right, Pugh, every word," said Mr. Parkley, nodding his head.

"Then you refuse my offer?" said the Cuban, with a bitter look of contempt stealing over his face.

"Do I?" replied Mr. Parkley.

"Yes, you are silent, and do not respond."

"Englishmen don't risk ten thousand pounds without looking where it is to go, my fine fellow," said Mr. Parkley, drumming away at the desk. "I don't say I shall not take it up, and I don't say I shall."

"You doubt me, then. Are not my papers good?"

"Unexceptionable."

"Is not the half of the wondrous wealth enough for you? You who only take out your ship and divers to get what it has taken me years to find. I tell you there are cargoes of this rich metal lying there—hundreds of thousands of pounds—a princely fortune; and yet you hesitate."

"Are there any volcanoes your way?" said Mr. Parkley, drily.

"Yes—many. Why?"

"I thought so," said the sturdy Englishman.

"It is enough," cried the Cuban, haughtily. "You play with me, and insult me."

And, as he spoke, with flashing eyes, he snatched at the two ingots, and began to wrap them up, but with a smile of contempt he threw them back on the desk.

"No, we do not," said Mr. Parkley, quietly; "only you are so red hot. I must have time to think."

"Time to think?"

"Yes. I like the idea, and I think I shall accept your offer."

"You believe in my papers, then?"

"Oh, yes, they are beyond suspicion," said Mr. Parkley, holding out his hand. "Only there are so many tricks played that one has to go carefully. Well, how are you? Glad to see you, and hope we shall be good friends."

"My great friend!" exclaimed the Cuban, throwing his arms round the sturdy little man, and nearly oversetting him, stool and all, in his fervid embrace. "They were right: you were the true enterprising man of energy after all."

"I say, don't do that again, please," said Mr.

Parkley; "we shake hands here, and save those hugs for the other sex—at least the young fellows do."

"But I am overjoyed," exclaimed the Cuban, enthusiastically. "Here, I will be English," he cried, holding out his hand and shaking that of Dutch most heartily. "We two shall be great friends, I see. You will come too. You are young and full of energy, and you shall be as rich as he. You shall both draw up gold in heaps, and be princes. Thank you both—thank you. And now we will make our plans."

"Gently, gently," exclaimed Mr. Parkley; "this all takes time. If that treasure has lain for three hundred years at the bottom of the sea, it will be safe for a few months longer."

"Ah, yes, yes."

"Then we must take our time, and, if we go, make plenty of preparation."

"Yes, yes," said the Cuban; "take plenty of diving suits and a diving bell."

"Don't you fidget about that, sir," said Mr. Parkley, proudly. "I think we can find such appliances as will do the trick. Eh, Mr. Pugh?"

Dutch nodded, and then looked uneasily at the Cuban, whose presence seemed to fill him with a vague trouble.

"I've got an important contract on, too," continued Parkley.

"A contract?" said the Cuban. "A new machine?"

"No, no; a bond such as we must have to do certain work."

"Yes, yes. I see."

"I've got to empty a ship off the coast here. She went down, laden with copper."

"I must see that," cried the Cuban, excitedly.

"Where is it? Let us go. I must see the men go under water."

"All in good time, sir—all in good time; for I must finish that job first. Well, Rasp," he continued, as that worthy came in.

"It's Mrs. Pug, sir. Shall I show her in?"

"No, no," exclaimed Dutch, eagerly.

But he was too late; for, as he spoke, a lady-like figure entered the room, and the bright, fair, girlish face, with its clustering curls of rich dark brown hair, turned from one to the other in a timid, apologetic way.

"I am sorry," she faltered. "You are engaged. My husband arranged—"

"Come in, my dear—come in," said Mr. Parkley, hopping off his stool, taking her hands, and patting them affectionately, as he placed her in a chair. "We've about done for to-day; and if we had not, there's nothing you might not hear. I'll be bound to say, Pugh keeps nothing from you."

"But she is beautiful!" muttered the Cuban, with sparkling eyes, as his lips parted, and a warm flush came into his creamy cheeks; while Dutch turned pale as he saw his admiration, and the vague feeling of dread came once more, in combination with one of dislike.

"But I'm not polite, my dear," said Mr. Parkley.

"This is Señor Manuel Lorry, a gentleman from Havana. Señor, Mrs. Pugh, the wife of my future partner, and almost my daughter."

The Cuban bowed low as the young English-

woman rose and looked anxiously at him, her eyes falling directly, and she blushed vividly, as though her fair young cheeks were scorched beneath his ardent gaze.

A pang shot through the breast of Dutch Pugh; but the eyes were raised again to his with so naïve and innocent a look that the pain was assuaged, and he crossed to her side.

"Well, señor," said Mr. Parkley, "I am to see that you are not imposed upon, so you are in my charge."

"I know so much of the straightforward honesty of the English, sir, that I am glad to be in your hands."

"That's complimentary," said Mr. Parkley.

"It is true, sir," said the Cuban, bowing.

"Very well, then," said Mr. Parkley, "we'll begin by trusting one another fully. Well, Rasp, what is it now?"

"Here's Sam Oakum just come from Barrport."

"Well, have they got out all the copper?"

"Not a bit of it, for the men won't go down."

"Why?"

"Say the engine don't supply enough air, and the receiver's bust. Won't go down, hany one on 'em."

"Nonsense!"

"John Tolly's dead or thereabouts."

"Dead?"

"So Sam says."

"Tut, tut, tut," ejaculated Mr. Parkley. "Always something wrong. Pugh, you'll have to go down directly, and set them an example, or I must. Tolly always comes up dead when he don't like a job."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Pugh, leaping off to catch her husband by the arm. "He must never go down again. Promise me you will not go," she cried, turning her ashy face up to his.

"But she is beautiful indeed!" muttered the Cuban.

"My darling," whispered Dutch, "be a woman. There is no danger."

"No danger!" she waived. "Dutch, I've dreamed night after night of some terrible trouble, and it is this. You must not—must not go."

"My darling," he whispered.

And, bending over her, he said a few words in her ear, which made her set her teeth firmly and try to smile, as she stood up clasping his hand.

"I will try," she whispered—"try so hard."

"I'm ready, Mr. Parkley," said the young man, hoarsely.

"That's right, Pugh. Go and set matters square. I'll see your wife safe back home."

"I leave her to you," said Dutch, in a low voice.

"Good-bye, my darling, get back home. I'll join you soon," he whispered, and hurried out of the office.

But as he turned for a moment, it was to see the Cuban's eyes fixed upon the trembling girl; while the goblin-like figures against the wall seemed to be nodding and gibbering at him, as if laughing at the troubles that assailed his breast.

"Off down to Barrport, Mr. Pug?" said Rasp, as he stood in the outer office.

"Yes, instantly. Come, Oakum," he said, to a rough-looking sailor who stood hat in hand.

"Sharp's the word, Mr. Pug," said Rasp; "but I

say," he continued, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, "that foreign chap, I don't like the looks o' he."

CHAPTER III.—DOWN BELOW.

"I TELL you what it is, sir," said the rough-looking sailor, as he walked by Dutch Pugh's side down to the station. "If I weer much along o' that Rasp it would soon come to a row."

"Why, man?"

"'Cause he's such an overbearing sort of a chap. He's one of them kind as always thinks he's skipper, and every one else is afore the mast. If he'd come aboard the bark and hailed me, I should ha' ast him to sit down on the deck and handed him the bacco; but when I comes in he sits and stares at one orty like, and goes on taking his bacco, in a savage sorter way, up his nose, and never so much as says, 'Have a pinch, mate,' or the like."

"You don't know him, my man," said Dutch, quietly.

"And don't want to," growled the old sailor. "I should just like to have him aboard our bark for a month. I'd show him how to count ten, I know."

"Well, there are more unlikely things," said Dutch. "Perhaps he may sail with you."

"What, are we going off, sir?" said the sailor, facing round.

"I don't know yet," said Dutch, "but it is possible."

"I'm glad on it," said the sailor, giving his canvas trousers a slap. "I'm tired o' hanging about the coast as we do. All this diving work's very well, but I want to get out in the blue again."

"Tell me all about the upset over the work," said Dutch. "Is Tolly bad?"

"Not he, sir," chuckled the sailor. "I'd ha' cured him with a rope's-end in about two twos. Didn't want to go down, and when the skipper turned rusty, and said as how he must, the other three chaps took part again him, and said that the engine was wrong, and a lot more; and, of course, his mates takes sides with him, and say as Mr. Parkley wants to send 'em to their death, and then the real sore place comes out—they wants a rise in the pay. 'Well, then,' says the skipper, 'I'll send for Mr. Parkley;' and then Tolly says in his blustering way, 'Ah,' he says, 'I aint afraid to go down, and if I loses my life it's all the governor's fault.' So down he goes, and dreckly after he begins pulling his siggle rope, and they pulls him up, unscrews him, and lays him on the deck, and gives him cold grog."

"But was he senseless?"

"He wasn't so senseless that he couldn't lap the grog, sir, no end; and if he warn't playing at sham Abraham, my name aint Sam Oakum."

Barrport was soon reached, and, boarding a small lugger, Dutch and his companion were put aboard a handsomely-rigged schooner, lying about four miles along the coast, at anchor, by the two masts of a vessel seen above the water. And here it was evident that arrangements had been made for diving, for a ladder was lashed to the side of the vessel, evidently leading down to the deck of the sunken ship, while four men in diving suits lounged against the bulwarks, their round helmets, so greatly out of pro-

portion to their heads, standing on a kind of rack, while the heavy leaden breast and back pieces they wore lay on the planks.

"Ah, Pugh," said a weather-beaten, middle-aged man, greeting Dutch as he reached the deck; "glad you've come. When I've a mutiny amongst my own men I know what to do; but with these fellows I've about done, especially as they say the machinery is defective."

"Of course, Captain Studwick," said Dutch aloud, "men cannot be asked to risk their lives. Here, Tolly, what is it?"

The diver spoken to, a fat-faced, pig-eyed fellow, with an artful leer upon his countenance, sidled up.

"The pump don't work as it should, Mr. Pugh," he said. "Near pretty nigh gone—warn't I, mates?"

The others nodded.

"Is the work below very hard?" said Dutch, quietly.

"Well, no, sir, I don't know as it's much harder nor usual; but the copper's heavy to move, and the way into the hold is littler nor usual; aint it, mates?"

"Take off your suit," said Dutch, after glancing at the men at the air pump, and seeing that they were those he could trust.

"It won't fit you, sir," said the man, surlily.

"I'm the best judge of that," said Dutch; "take it off instantly."

The man glanced at his companions, but seeing no help forthcoming from them, he began sulkily to take off the copper gorget and the india-rubber garments, with the heavy leaden-soled boots, which, with the help of the old sailor, Dutch slipped on with the ease of one accustomed to handle such articles; then placing the leaden weights—the chest and back piece, he took up the helmet, saw that the tube from the back was properly adjusted and connected with the air pump, which he examined, and then turned to Captain Studwick.

"You'll see that no one touches the tube, Mr. Studwick," he said, in a low tone. "One of those fellows might feel disposed to tamper with it."

The captain nodded, and Dutch then lifted on the helmet, the rim of which fitted exactly to the gorget, had the screws tightened, and then, with the old sailor and the captain himself seeing that the tube and signalling cords were all right, the pump began to work, and Dutch walked heavily to the side, took hold of the rings of the ladder, and began to descend.

In a few moments his head had disappeared, and his blurred figure could be made out going down into the darkness, while a constant stream of exhausted air which escaped from the helmet-valve kept rising in great bubbles. The pump clanked as its pistons worked up and down, and the sailors and divers, the former eagerly and the latter in a sulky fashion, approached the side and looked over.

Captain Studwick himself held the signal-line, and answered the calls made upon him for more or less air by communicating with the men at the pump; and so the minutes passed, during which time, by the necessity for lengthening out the tube and cord, it was evident that Dutch was going over the submerged vessel in different directions. All

had gone so well that the captain had relaxed somewhat in his watchfulness, when he was brought back to attention by a violent jerking of the cord.

"More air!" he shouted—"quick!" just as there was a yell, a scuffle, and the man Tolly struggled into the middle of the deck, wrestling hard with a black sailor, who backed away from him, and then running forward like a ram, struck his adversary in the chest, and sent him rolling over into the scuppers.

By this time the signalling had ceased, and Dutch was evidently moving about at his ease.

"What was that?" said Captain Studwick, sternly, as the man Tolly got up and made savagely at the black, but was restrained by the strong arm of the old sailor, Oakum.

Tolly and the black both spoke excitedly together, and not a word was to be understood.

"Here you, Mr. Tolly, what is it?" cried the captain. "Hold your tongue, Pollo."

"I bash him head, sah. I—"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said the captain. "What was it?"

"I happened to look round, sir, and found this stupid nigger standing on the tube, and when I dragged him off he struck me."

"Who you call nigger, you ugly, white, fat-head tef!" shouted the black, savagely. "I bash you ugly head."

"Silence!" cried the captain.

"It big dam lie, sah," cried the black. "I turn roun', and see dat ugly tef set him hoof on de tubum, and top all de wind out of Mass' Dutch Pugh, and I scruff him."

"You infamous—"

"Silence!" roared the captain. "Stand back, both of you. Oakum, see that no one goes near the tube. Cast in gently there; he's coming up."

This was the case, for in another minute the great round top of the helmet was seen to emerge from the water; its wearer mounted the side, and was soon relieved of his casque, displaying the flushed face of Dutch, who looked sharply round.

"Some one must have stepped on the tube," he said. "Who was it?"

"It lies between these two," said Captain Studwick, pointing to the pair of adversaries.

"It was the nigger, sir," said Tolly.

"No, sah, 'sure you, sah. I too much sense, sah, to put um foot on de tubum. It was dis fellow, sah," said the black, with dignity.

"I presume it was an accident," said Dutch, quietly. Then, turning to the divers—"I have been down, as you see, my men. The apparatus is in perfect working order, the water clear, the light good, and the copper easy to get at. Begin work directly. If anything goes wrong, it is the fault of your management."

"But aint this black fellow to be punished?" began the man Tolly.

"Mr. John Tolly, you are foreman of these divers," said Dutch, quietly, "and answerable to Mr. Parkley for their conduct. If one of the sailors deserves punishment, that is Captain Studwick's affair."

(To be continued.)

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XXIX.—ON THE SEARCH.

DOCTOR THOMAS HARDON, of Somesham, seemed likely to have full enjoyment of his brother's property, for Time kept on busy at work over his harvest. Septimus Hardon slowly and laboriously did copying for the law-stationers, apparently quite content with his lot, for he scarcely ever gave a thought now to the quest he had commenced with old Matt; Lucy toiled on incessantly at her sewing machine, and the treadles set in motion by her feet were hardly ever still. Journeys were made to and from the warehouse from whence she had her work, but mostly alone, for Lucy had lost her protector: he had not returned since the day upon which he had been taken ill, and they knew not where he lodged. The information might have been obtained from Agnes; but save a short note or two enclosed in the regular letters sent to Mrs. Jarker, in which she implored her to watch over the child, Lucy had not heard from her. Mr. Sterne came and went, visiting them as he would have visited at any other house, treating Lucy with a calm, cold deference that made her weep bitterly after each visit, and grow paler day by day; for the curate told himself that he had at last conquered a foolish fancy, that he had triumphed as became him, and that all he felt now was a sublime pity which prompted him to watch her when she went out alone, and follow her at a distance till he saw her once more in safety, when he would hurry home.

His heart was very full of pity for Lucy Grey, even though he knew not of the tears she shed in secret.

As to carrying on his researches alone, the very thought of such a proceeding never occurred to Septimus Hardon—it seemed to border too much upon the impossible; and, besides, he was deep in that Slough of Despond—poverty, which, instead of prompting men to energetic action, too often enervates and breeds despair. So he waited on day after day, hoping to see old Matt again, and yet dreading the prosecution of his claim—shrinking when it was named, for he seemed to grow less hopeful as time wore on. The curate had hinted more than once how willing he would be to aid him; but Septimus always shrank so from entering upon the matter, that Mr. Sterne, from motives of delicacy, soon ceased to broach the subject.

The sewing machine clicked on early and late, and Jean's lark, when he heard it, would set up his crest and whistle away, waking the echoes of the court, while at the open window, when the bird was silent, Jean Marais himself would crane forward and listen eagerly to the fragment of some mournful little air which he could just catch at times, as the machine stopped, and Lucy arranged a portion of her work. But the sweet notes from the first-floor seemed to rouse the lark to fresh exertions, when its master would angrily chide it, and perhaps cover it with a handkerchief, but only to snatch it away hurriedly.

"For she loves to hear him whistle," he would

say; and then he would smile again, as the bird burst forth once more in its joyous carol.

At times Lucy would ascend to the attic, to take up a bunch of green food she had bought for the birds, or a few flowers for the cripple, whose eyes brightened when he saw her; but these visits were mostly paid when *ma mère* was from home; for in spite of her civil words, there was something in the old woman's quiet smile that chilled her, so that she dreaded meeting her more than if her looks had been those of anger. But she knew not the bitter words that had passed between mother and son upon the subject, when *ma mère* once angrily crushed a bunch of violets Lucy had taken up to the suffering youth.

The sewing machine was clicking away merrily one day, so that Mrs. Jarker could hear it from her sick bed; Septimus Hardon was busily copying at his little table, and the lark jocund as ever, when a slow step was heard upon the stairs. Lucy stopped her machine to listen, and even Septimus raised his head from his work. But there was no mistake—it was not a visitor for upstairs, but old Matt's own shuffling footstep, and Lucy ran to admit him.

Paler, thinner, more haggard, he came slowly into the room, rubbing his hands and smiling with pleasure at the warmth of the greeting he received.

"Never better," he said—"capital, thank you. Been ill, though, and not able to get out before; though I was afraid you would get all the work done without me. What have you done since I saw you, sir?"

"Nothing," said Septimus, quietly.

"Didn't expect you had," said Matt, drily. "No offence, sir; but I thought perhaps you might want me; so if you'll get your hat, sir, we'll start at the point where we left off, and see after the doctor."

"But you will not be well enough," said Septimus, hanging back from the task—more on his own account than on that of the old man.

"Don't you be afraid of that, sir. I should have been well weeks ago if it hadn't been for fidgiting about your affairs, and wanting to get out. I'm as strong as a lion now, sir; but let's be at it. I want a new suit of clothes out of the estate, you know, sir, when you get it," and the old man chuckled and nodded at Lucy.

Septimus slowly wiped his pen, and carefully put away his paper, sighing the while, for he was unwilling to start, and the fit of eagerness had long ago evaporated; but at last he declared himself to be in readiness, and the pair once more started off upon their search.

Upon this occasion they directed their steps at once to Finsbury, and, after a slow and what seemed to Matt a painful walk, they reached their destination.

"Here is the house," said Septimus, after a reference to his pocket-book; "this is the number."

"H'm!—'Tollicks' Registry Office for Servants,'" read Matt from the board over the door. "This isn't the doctor's. Sure of the number, sir?"

"Yes," said Septimus, referring once more to his pocket-book—"yes; this is the number I took down."

"So it is," said Matt, after a reference to his

own memorandum book. "That's right enough; but wait a bit, one never knows where to be right or wrong with numbers; they always were things as bothered a man; for you have your numbers so-and-so A, and B, and C, and goodness knows how many more, until you're regularly puzzled. Perhaps that's an A, or a B, or something of that kind, and the number we want is somewhere else."

"Let's walk on a little," said Septimus; and they went slowly down one side and up the other, but this proved to be the only house numbered as they wanted.

"Do you know of a Mr. Phillips, a surgeon, in this neighbourhood?" said Septimus to the first policeman they met.

The man of order shook his head, beat his white gloves together, and then re-arranged the shaken head in his shiny stock before continuing his walk.

"Let's go to the fountain head at once," said Matt; "perhaps they know something about him. Here we are again—'Tollicks' Registry Office for Servants.' Let's see what Mr. Tollicks knows about him."

"Stop a minute," said Septimus, to keep procrastination alive for a few moments longer. "Perhaps there is another door."

"No more doors there, unless they're back-doors," growled Matt.

And leading the way, they stood in a floor-clothed room—the office itself—furnished with a green-baize-covered table, bearing a stencil plate, ink-stand, and brush; and beside the wall a long bench, upon which sat apparently one of the servants waiting to be hired from ten to four, as announced by a bill in the window, which spoke of cooks, house-maids, and general servants as being regularly in attendance; but most probably the others, tired, had gone home for the day, for the damsel in question was the only one visible. She was "Cornwall sure," as indicated by the shape of her nose, though any ignorant person might have been excused for mistaking her for an inhabitant of the sister isle.

The door gave a sharp "ting" as it was opened, and another as it was closed—the refinement of the old jingling door-bell of the chandler's shop—when the young lady on the bench rose, and made a bob, and sat down again; and some one from an inner chamber cried, "Coming!" Then a small dog with a very apoplectic voice barked loudly to the tune of a little bell secured to its neck, and came waddling round the counter to smell Septimus Hardon's legs; when visiting old Matt for the same purpose, that gentleman favoured him with a pinch of snuff dropped softly towards his nose, provoking a most violent fit of sneezing, and a loud and agitated jingling of the tiny bell.

With the exception of the sneezing, there was now silence in the office for a few moments, till the sound of rattling milk-cans upon the pavement was heard. A man gave vent to the well-known melodious London yodel, and then opened the door, which again said "ting," when from the inner chamber appeared a tall, stoutish, elderly-young female of very grand deportment, which she displayed to great advantage by making a most ceremonious salute—one that would have been invaluable to a

large-minded family of small means. So elegant was the salute that even old Matt was staggered, and performed an operation rather rare with him—he took off his hat.

"The side-door, my good man," said the lady to the milkman, who grinned, winked to himself, and drew the door after him, when, quietly placing the customary "ha'porth" in a cream tin, he set it in a corner by the door, jangled his cans as he took them up, and then yelled his way down the street.

"Mrs. Tollicks?" said Septimus, raising his shabby hat.

"Miss Tollicks," said the lady, with another profound curtsy almost equal to the former. "Perhaps you will be seated, sir."

Perhaps he would have been; but as there was only the form upon which the auburn-haired damsel sat while waiting to be hired, Septimus merely bowed again, and said, "Thank you," at the same moment inadvertently directing a glance at the maiden in question.

"Thoroughly trustworthy, and has an excellent character from her last place," said Miss Tollicks, who had seen the glance; "a very good cook—plain cook, early riser, strictly temperate; in fact, a disciple of the late Father Mathew. Requires no followers, and only one half-day out in the month. Only twenty-two; wages twelve pounds; and a capital washer."

The damsel had risen, and stood with her eyes half-closed, head on one side, and her rather large mouth squeezed up into a modest smirk; and as Septimus Hardon knew nothing of the maiden, he was bound to accept Miss Tollicks' eulogium; but as to the last-named quality, it was very evident that the girl was not a capital washer of self, while a detergent applied to her hair would have made a manifest improvement.

"Indeed," said Septimus, bowing; "I am obliged, but—"

"Only *twelve* pounds wages," said Miss Tollicks, with emphasis.

"And very reasonable," said Septimus; "but—"

"You will find very few general servants willing to go for less than fourteen," said Miss Tollicks.

"I suppose not," said Septimus; "but at present—"

"Then you don't think this young person would suit your requirements?" said Miss Tollicks.

"Decidedly not," said Septimus, eagerly.

For he was getting so exceedingly confused that had Miss Tollicks pressed her point he would most probably have ended by hiring the damsel off-hand; for every glance directed for help at old Matt glanced off the impenetrable armour in which the old man had encased himself.

"Mary Donovan," said the lady of the house with dignity, "it is five minutes past four; you need not wait any longer to-day."

Mary Donovan rose at the instant, and made a bob to Miss Tollicks, and one each to Matt and Septimus—bobs that were a disgrace to her after the elaborate obeisances she had so lately seen made; and then she took her departure, played out by a couple of "tings," Miss Tollicks smiling blandly, and courteously holding her head on one

side as she stood waiting to know the object of her visitors' call.

Miss Tollicks was a lady whom no one would have supposed to have been born a genius, from the utter absence of ennobling qualities in her face; but for all that she made up showily, possessed a good figure, had two little corkscrew curls on either side of her face, a suspicion of thinness about her hair-parting, which on a small scale exhibited somewhat the appearance of certain stout ladies' dresses in the back when they have been without assistance in the hooking department; for the said parting began correctly and then gradually opened out, but only to contract again and finish evenly some distance farther back. By way of head-dress, Miss Tollicks wore a black velvet blackbird, with handsome gold-bead eyes, the said ornithological head-dress being kept in its place by means of a fillet of black velvet and gold twist. A very thick, plain-linked, jet chain was round her neck, a very glossy buckle at her waist, fastening the cincture of her very rusty black silk dress, slightly rubbed at the plaits; so that altogether Miss Tollicks presented the aspect of a lady superior at the very least.

"We merely called," said Septimus, after an awkward pause, during which he had been waiting for Matt to begin, "to—er—er—to—er—that is, to ask if you could give us any information respecting a Mr. Phillips, a surgeon, who once resided here."

"Dear me, how disappointing!" said Miss Tollicks. "Now, do you know I thought you had come after servants—I did indeed."

"Really," said Septimus, sadly, "I am sorry to have caused you disappointment; but it was important that I should know, and I called—urgent—troubled you," he stammered again, looking in vain at Matt, who only took snuff.

"Oh, don't apologize, pray," said Miss Tollicks; "come in and sit down, and let's—let me," she said, correcting herself—"let me hear what it is. There, don't laugh at me, for one is obliged to be so particular how one speaks to the grand people who come for servants."

Miss Tollicks led the way into her inner chamber, where the fat dog slept snoringly in the sunshine; and, after a little hesitation, her two visitors took the proffered chairs.

"Mr. Flips, surgeon," said the lady of the place, after a little preliminary conversation, "no, I never heard the name, and I've been here two years this next week, when my landlord will most likely call. He says he has a bad memory, but he always recollects the quarter-days. He lives down in Dorsetshire, and when he comes up I can ask him if you like—perhaps he would know, or you might write; but he's sure to write to me directly to say he is coming, so that, as he says, I may be ready for him, just as if one ever was ready for one's landlord. Two years—yes, yes, just two years," she continued, musingly. "There was a whole year at the millinery, which didn't half pay the rent; for people here don't seem to wear bonnets, and when they do, they've been turned and cleaned and altered, or something or anothered, although I put my prices so low that there was no room for a bit of profit. Then there was the fancy stationery three months, which

was worse, for the only kind of stationery the people fancied was penny stamps, which cost me a penny apiece, and then people either wanted them to be stuck on their letters, or else wrapped up in paper. Then there was the newspaper and periodical trade, which was worse than all; for, as if just out of aggravation, the people always came and asked for the very thing you had not got. I declare that if it wasn't that you can sit down and read your stock, the periodical trade would be unbearable. Only think of the trouble people gave you by ordering things regularly and never coming and fetching them; so that the back numbers used to get piled up most terribly. And now, you know, I've been six months at this, and it's so trying, you can't think; for, you see, I'm worse off than anybody; I've not got to please the missuses—I beg pardon, the *mistresses* only, but the servants; and really, after my experience, I can say that there's no pleasing any one."

Septimus Hardon glanced hopelessly at Matt, but he would not see him, and took pinch after pinch of snuff furiously, with a comical expression upon his countenance the former could not interpret.

"You see, though," continued Miss Tollicks, who seemed to have made up her mind to thoroughly enjoy herself with a good talk—"you see, though, there is one advantage—there's no stock required, and it is genteel; but really, after all, it is so vexatious and pays so badly that I think I shall give it up, and take to tobacco. I suppose it's a business that pays well, and people do use it to such an extent that it's wonderful. But let me see! Phillips—Flips—Flips—no, I never even heard of the name. But, do you know, I shouldn't wonder if a doctor did once live here; for there's a regular street-door bell that rings downstairs, and another that rings up in the second-floor front, just as the night-bell used to be at Doctor Masters's, where I once lived as—ahem, ahem!—excuse my cough, pray," said Miss Tollicks, colouring. "But there," she said, sharply, the next moment, "where I lived as lady's-maid, and I don't see why I should be ashamed of it."

"Hear, hear!" said old Matt, speaking for the first time.

"But can you tell who lived here before you?" said Septimus.

"Oh, yes—a dairy," replied Miss Tollicks; "but it was only here six months, and my landlord told me the people didn't pay any rent, but went off in the night so shabby, leaving nothing behind but a black and white plaster cow, and a moss-basket with three chalk eggs, in the window; and my landlord says that's why he looks so sharp after me, which isn't nice, you know; but then you can't be surprised. Let me see, I think it was a coffee-house before that."

"Perhaps," said Septimus, rising, "you will find that out for me when your landlord calls. I don't think we will trouble him by writing; and maybe you'll ask him how long it is since a Mr. Phillips lived here, and if he can tell you to where he removed."

"That I will," said Miss Tollicks, pleasantly; "and if you would not mind taking one of my cards,

you might be able to recommend me to one or two patrons; and you, too, sir," she continued, handing one to Matt, which he took with a comical, amused expression, and carefully placed inside the lining of his hat.

"Haden't you better ask for the landlord's address, and write at once?" growled Matt, as soon as they were outside the house.

"Perhaps it would be better," said Septimus, hesitating; "but no, we won't trouble her again; and it would only hasten the matter a day or two—possibly not at all. She has been very civil and obliging."

"Very," said Matt. "Good sort of woman, she seems; but what a tongue! As soon as ever she had trapped us in that room, 'Matt, my lad,' I said, 'the people in this world are divided into two classes—talkers and listeners. You belong to the second class, so keep your place;' and I did, sir, as you know. I never attempt to tackle a woman on her own ground, sir, which is talking. I can talk, sir—leastwise, I could when I was well; but it's my humble opinion that that woman would have rapped out three words to my one."

"There," said Matt, after they had walked a little way along the street, he all the while rubbing his forefinger slowly round and round his pill snuff-box, "I've taken all my snuff, as ought to have lasted till to-morrow night, and all through that precious woman's tongue. Let's go in here, sir, and get a penn'orth."

"Here" was a very dirty-looking little tobacconist and newsagent's; and, so as to leave no stone unturned, Matt, whilst being served, made inquiry touching Mr. Phillips, a surgeon.

"No," said the woman who served, as she allayed the irritation of her nasal organ by rubbing it with the back of the hand which held the snuff-scoop, and so provoked a loud fit of sneezing—"no, not in my time."

"How long has that been?" said Matt.

"Five years," replied the woman.

Septimus Hardon walked out of the shop, and, after paying for his snuff, old Matt followed him into the street, and they bent their steps homewards.

"I'm dull and stupid and not right, you see," said Matt, "or else I should have known why the name wasn't in the newest of those two Directories. One, you see, was more than ten years old, and the other—well, it wasn't the newest. But you leave it to me, sir, and I'll try and find a medical directory, for I think there is such a thing. I know there is a legal one, for I helped print it; and there's one for the parsons, so there's safe to be one for the doctors. I'll ferret it out, sir; and I shall be better to-morrow. Those look nice, don't they?" said the old man, stopping short in front of a pork-butcher's shop.

"Very," said Septimus, dreamily, and without glancing at the freshly-made chains of sausages hanging from the hooks in the window.

"You may always buy your sausages here, and depend upon 'em," said Matt; "and if you'll listen to my advice, you'll take a pound back with you. They'll wrap 'em in a bit of paper for you, and you can slip them in your pocket, and have a nice fry

for tea when you get home, and then rest content; for though we haven't done much, and I should have liked you to have taken that landlord's name and address, yet things are getting in train, I can tell you. So you wait quietly at home, sir, till I come again, for I suppose you won't want to do anything yourself. I shall be stronger and better to-morrow or next day, I hope; for somehow I can't get along as I used, and feel weak and muddled. But there, sir, slip in and get them sausages, and have a bit of patience, and don't try to build any more till our mortar's a bit settled."

Septimus Hardon smiled sadly at the idea of his being impatient to go on with the search, and, obeying his companion's hest, he obtained the pound of flesh; and then they walked slowly on till they were once more within the shadow of the law.

"And now I'm off, sir," said Matt, stopping short in Carey-street. "I think I shall go and lie down."

"Can I do anything for you?" said Septimus, earnestly.

"Yes, sir," said Matt; "let me have my own way, please. You let me go my way, and I'll work the matter out for you if it's possible, so that it shall be in trim for the lawyers, and then I'll give up. But there, I won't do anything without consulting you first, and—no, thank you; I'm off in a moment. Don't you do anything, whatever you do, to put your uncle on his guard. Depend upon it, he thinks now, after all this time, that you've given it quite up; while, if things go on as I hope, we shall come down upon him one of these days in a way that shall startle him—shake his nerves so that he sha'n't find a tonic for them."

Old Matt shuffled off, once more steadily refusing to partake of any refreshment; while Septimus slowly and thoughtfully made his way towards the entrance to the Rents, pondering over his visit to the churches some weeks back, and then thinking that it would be better to settle down contentedly in his present state, for fear that, after research, labour, and endless publicity, the words of his uncle should prove to be those of truth, and his condition worse than it was at the present time.

"Better the present doubt and obscurity," he muttered. "Octavius Hardon, Lavinia Addison, Ellen Morris—all witnesses to the truth, but dead, dead."

"Stop, stop!" cried a voice, as he turned into the Rents; and the next moment, with his hand to his side, old Matt stood by him, gasping. "I aint the thing to-night, sir; I'm ill, but I've got it here—here somewhere," he said, tapping his forehead, "and I can't get it out. It's here, though. It's 'Medicine and attendance, Mrs. Hardon—so much,' isn't it? That's it, sir, aint it?"

Septimus stared wonderingly at him.

"You may well look, sir," said Matt, panting still; "but that's it, and I've seen it somewhere, and I'll tell you where directly. It all came like a flash just after I left you; there it was, just as I saw it written down: 'Medicine and attendance, Mrs. Hardon—so much;' and I can keep seeming to see the words dancing before my eyes now. I saw them written down somewhere once, and I can't just now say where; but I seem to feel that I've got them all right, and I shall have it. Good night, sir. Re-

member me to Miss Lucy." And the old man staggered away, muttering aloud, "Medicine and attendance—medicine and attendance;" while more than one person in the street turned to look at the bent figure, to shake a sapient head, and mutter—
"Or hospital."

For poor old Matt looked sick unto death, though Septimus Hardon, deep in his own thoughts, had taken but little notice of the old man's indisposition.

Fresh Fish.

THAT fresh-water fish are deserving the term bad is against all evidence—that of all the rest of nations and the mighty hosts of Moses amongst ourselves; for it is not correct to say that the liking of the Jews for fresh-water fish begins and ends with their religious ordinances, as even barbel are much sought after by them upon other occasions, and in which they—a thrifty class—find no "bad material," because the chemistry of their kitchens is the result of common sense and simple appliances. Take bread crumbs, for example. This is interpreted by many uninformed cooks as rubbing the crumb of bread to atoms between the palms of the hand, and leaving them to obtain the requisite brown hue in the pan. Instead of this, take any odd pieces of clean bread, place them in the oven until they are crisp and brown, and then crush them beneath a rolling-pin.

But it is the frying-pan from which most of the lamentable failures of excellent fresh-water fish can be dated, and in which it obtains the title of "bad material" from careless cooks. Every man can judge of good frying by its results. It is an art fortunately readily learned, yet the more incomprehensible is it that it should be so sadly neglected. Frying is no more than boiling in oleaginous matter. Once convince the would-be proficient of this—that the proper browning of the fish does not arise from its contact with the bottom of the pan, for once there it would stick, burn, and be only removable with the loss of its skin, an unsightly mess—and you have made valuable progress with the tyro.

If there is too little liquid in your pan, only half your object is boiled; the other is warmed into a greasy mass of half-cooked viand, by the drops of molten fat which are thrown up on the surface of the fish, there remaining to displease the eye and offend the palate. Having plenty of lard, butter, or olive oil in the pan, and an equable fire, let it heat till the proper temperature is obtained.

To learn this, have ready several small fingers of bread, and dip them from time to time in the liquid, and the bread will become of a pure brown colour after a few seconds of immersion. Now is the time. If the fish be small, put it in and lift the pan slightly above the fire, for the heat must not be allowed to increase, or your fish will either be of a dark and opaque hue or will burn. When, however, the object is large, the bread test should indicate a darker colour, for the immersion of a large object—a sole, for instance—will reduce the temperature to the proper tone, and thus you will get a clear, bright brown appearance, and not the least greasy. It

should be added that the white of egg should be well beaten up, and the thin layer almost allowed to dry before the bread crumbs are applied. When flour is used, that of the haricot bean will be found the best.

GREVILLE FENNELL.

A Good Bargain.

"WHAT, no dogs, Léon?"
"The caymans dined off those I possessed," responded my creole companion, "and I have never been able to afford others. The poor brutes rushed into the water one day to quench their thirst, and I lost them."

Léon was a creole of French extraction, who, during my stay in Louisiana, many years ago, invited me to join him in a deer-hunt, for the forests of this State abound in these animals, as well as in numerous other kinds of game. I agreed, of course, as these descendants of the first French colonists are, as a rule, good-natured and hospitable people, making very useful and agreeable companions for a day's sport. I say useful, because, if Léon was a fair specimen, they spend all their time in hunting, fishing, and making excursions into the neighbouring forests, the result being that they are apt at all the devices by which a sportsman supplements his skill with the gun.

"Look there!" he said, the next minute; "do you see those large eyes watching us from just below the surface of the water?"

I followed his glance, and shuddered as I became aware of the presence of several alligators, apparently watching us as we stood still for a minute, having been pursuing the long course of the Red River, or rather one of its arms. However, my companions evinced no fear of these, to my mind, most objectionable of reptiles; but, unfastening a little Indian boat which was moored a little further on, and desiring me to get in, rowed me across to the other side. Numbers of these creatures slowly moved off at our approach, and we saw their heads above water for some distance, until they became mere undistinguishable specks.

Reaching the other side, we saw before us one vast glade, shaded by large trees, to which clung creepers of every description, and with a fine, soft grass under foot. Large birds of prey flapped their wings over our heads as they took their flight above the tops of the trees, and small green parrots flew before us, giving vent to cries resembling little bursts of laughter. I stood still, lost in admiration of the grand, calm beauty of Mother Nature in these majestic solitudes, as yet undisturbed by the destroying hand of civilization.

It was the time of year called the Indian summer by the creoles, that is in reality late in the autumn, by far the best time for sporting purposes in this burning climate. After very cold nights comes a bright, moderately hot day, followed by a soft warm evening. Some of the trees had lost their leaves, but others were of the most beautiful tints of orange, red, and brown. We had started at an early hour, and the morning was delightfully fresh and invigorating.

"Come," said my companion, "let us get on, sir."

What are you looking at? Follow me, please, and do not on any account startle the deer by firing at any of these birds, for in that case we shall lose all chance of securing anything. Do you see that large oak in the distance close to a clump of acacias? Will you hide yourself behind the trunk?"

"And what are you going to do?"

"I am going to beat all the bushes round, and if the deer are here, as I expect, enjoying the sun between the trees, one at least is sure to come within range of your gun."

I hastened silently to place myself in the spot he indicated, and watched him as he disappeared among the bushes, the dry twigs seeming scarcely to crackle under the light touch of his mocassins. Léon's appearance was decidedly picturesque. He wore a flannel tunic, his waist being encircled by a leather belt, from which hung a large handful of that moss termed Spaniard's beard, which hangs in great quantities from the branches of the Louisiana cypress. This fine and thread-like moss served him as wadding for his gun, an old weapon whose many scars told of the length of its services. Add to this his mocassins of deer skin, his long black hair and dark complexion, and some idea may be formed of his appearance.

For perhaps half an hour I remained there, silent, watchful, and waiting impatiently for the approach of something for my gun, several times seeming to hear a noise behind; but though I turned quickly, and looked well in all directions, I saw nothing. At last two young deer came bounding into view. My heart beat quickly with excitement, for I was no experienced sportsman, and I raised my gun to my shoulder; but, alas! too late; for ere I could fire the light-footed creatures had disappeared among the bushes. It was very vexatious, and I cursed my stupidity and want of promptness, feeling a dread lest Léon should return, to learn what a chance I had let slip through my fingers. However, fortune was kind for once, and I was still grumbling to myself over the lost opportunity, when, turning round, to my great joy I beheld a fine buck actually advancing in the direction of the tree behind which I stood, evidently unaware of my proximity. I rested my gun on a branch, took careful aim, trying to steady my hand, which would tremble, and fired, when, to my delight, the deer staggered, dropped on its knee, recovered itself by a desperate effort, and galloped off, just as the creole appeared, out of breath with running.

"Where is it? Have you killed it?"

"It is wounded," I answered, feeling rather small as his eye wandered over me with the pity of ten years' seniority and a larger proportion of experience.

"A gun like that, and only wounded!" he said; and then, stooping, he passed a finger over the grass. "Well, at all events, there is no doubt that it is wounded, for here is blood. We will have him yet."

He stopped as I was about to follow him.

"Have you seen any one since I left you?"

"Certainly not!" I responded in some surprise at the question. "Who on earth should one see in this desolate place?"

"Who? Some of those devils of red-skins. They

prowl about in these parts at all hours of the day and night."

"And are they dangerous? Would they be of inimical tribes?"

"No," said Léon, in a tone of disgust. "Probably to-morrow one of them will bring you the very animal you have already shot, and offer to sell it. They do quite a trade in that sort of thing. But we won't give them the chance if we can help it. Come, sir, let us follow the track of your game."

It is tiring work, that of following on the traces of a wounded animal, examining step by step the grass and every stick or stone that comes in your way. I dislike it extremely: it seems to me to be only a suitable task for dogs. The creole, however, fortunately, had no such feeling; he followed the track for some time, until we came to a place that brought us to a full stop, for we could proceed no farther on account of the mud. The reeds that grew thickly here appeared to have been trampled in places, and it was evident that the light-footed deer had ventured where we dared not pursue.

"There is only one thing for it," said Léon, somewhat disconsolately. "We must separate, and, you going that way, I this, beat the country till we find him, or give it up. I will meet you here again in two hours' time."

He set off to the left without further parley, and I turned to the right, without much energy, telling myself that the game was not worth the candle. I was pretty well satisfied as it was; for I knew, and Léon knew, that I had not missed my aim, so where was the good of bothering? Acting on the impulse resulting from these reflections, I went straight forward, as quietly as possible, so as not to scare away the plentiful feathered inhabitants of the forest, determining to enjoy myself, shooting the lovely little green parroquets I had admired before, buzzards, or one or two of the squirrels I had seen playing among the branches while waiting behind the oak.

An hour slipped by, during which several large birds of prey and a good many wood-pigeons had fallen to my gun, and I began to consider the advisability of retracing my steps. Of course there was no road, no beaten path, and I could only guide myself by the sun when returning. After walking for some distance, I found myself on the borders of a marsh, hidden by luxuriant reeds, surrounded by the most lovely vegetation, and enlivened by the cry of snipe, which flew overhead. As I stood considering which direction to take—for I had not seen this swamp as I came—I caught sight of an Indian at a short distance, crouching at the foot of a tree, and engaged in what was to me an entirely new kind of sport. In his hand he held a long but perfectly straight cane, in the end of which he inserted a little arrow. Then, blowing with all his might, this light weapon was sent to a distance of twenty feet, or perhaps more, proving the death of some unsuspecting snipe, which came near its concealed enemy. This, being so silent, is a very satisfactory method; indeed, what can be more delightful than to choose a shady and retired nook, there to sit and drop bird after bird noiselessly, so that others are not scared away, until a sufficient

number have fallen, and then to come out, and, picking up one's victims, to extract the arrow ready for another time?

The savage, however, did not permit me long to observe him, for he speedily became aware of my presence; and, getting up in an embarrassed way, waited for me to speak. His language consisted of a mixture of English, French, and Spanish—of course, I am not alluding to that spoken by his tribe, for of that I know nothing—and this mixed tongue is not difficult to understand.

"Are you having good sport?" I asked.

"I have taken nothing but some little birds," he said, pointing to those which lay here and there on the ground.

"Let me look at that," said I, advancing a little nearer, and indicating his weapon. "Will you sell it to me?"

He made a sign of assent, but as I was about to cross the intervening ground to take it, motioned me back.

"Not there," he said, hastily. "There is mud in that place. You must go round."

As I did not at first comprehend him, the warning was not in time to prevent my putting my foot on a bunch of reeds which looked firm and trustworthy. The Indian made a step towards me, looking rather startled.

"Take care! Take care!" he said.

But it was too late; the reeds gave way beneath my weight, and I was rapidly sinking, when he extended a hand, and assisted me to firm ground, afterwards wiping the mud off my clothes with some leaves with a politeness that quite took me by surprise.

"Thanks," I said, inwardly wondering what I could do to pay him for his services, not feeling sure whether the current coin of the realm would be acceptable.

As I cast my eyes round, I caught sight of some large animal lying half-hidden by some reeds, and a second glance assured me that it was a fine buck. "That is rather a large animal for this little weapon."

"My gun is over there," said the savage, apparently a little disconcerted. "I have been hunting this morning, and now I am taking some rest."

"Let's look at this deer," said I. "What will you take for it? I will buy it of you."

He named a sum so moderate that I paid it on the spot, and a little further conversation resulted in his engaging to bring it to me on the following morning. Having settled this, we shook hands, and parted. I had scarcely left him above a minute, when I met Léon, who had heard the voices, and wanted to know what was going on. I related the incident to him, suppressing nothing; though I felt that he would not have a very favourable impression of my discernment in trusting to the support of a clump of reeds in a bog.

"Did you examine the animal he professed to have shot?" he asked, as I concluded. "I should like to see it myself. You should not put faith in anything these red-skins say. They will concoct any number of lies. I should say in all probability that is the buck you shot this morning."

"We shall see to-morrow, when he brings it," said I; but Léon laughed, and shook his head.

"Depend upon it, that Indian will not come near you again."

I felt sure he would, being young and confiding; but determined to wait for the next day to show my companion his mistake. However, he was right and I was wrong, for I never saw that Indian again.

Lightning Conductors.

DURING a thunderstorm we may notice that buildings having a rod of metal descending from their highest point into the earth, called "lightning conductors," are not injured by the storm. Can we explain the reason of this? We have seen by our experiments that electricity passes away from a conductor if it is connected by a metal chain with the earth, but not if it is connected by glass.

Let us now work our machine till we get a spark, when we bring our finger near it. If we now take a metal rod in our hand, and hold it close to our finger, so that its end coincides with the point of the finger, and bring both near the prime conductor of our machine, we shall find we cannot now get a spark to touch the finger—it will invariably pass to the metal rod; and if the rod be long enough to reach the ground, the electricity will not pass through our body at all, but pass straight to the earth by the metal rod.

If, however, instead of a metal rod, we take a glass one, and use it in the same way, the result will be very different. Now, we shall not be able to get a spark to touch the glass at all; it will invariably strike the finger, and pass through our body to the ground. If, therefore, we have a metal rod standing fixed in the ground beside us during a thunderstorm, a flash of lightning coming would, like the spark from the conductor, pick out the metal rod, and pass by it harmlessly to the ground, leaving us untouched. On the other hand, were a glass rod beside us, the lightning would leave the glass rod untouched, and pass through our bodies to the ground, most likely depriving us of life in its passage.

This is the whole principle of lightning conductors. We express it by saying that electricity always passes by the best conductors. Knowing, as we do, that metals are better conductors than stone, wood, &c., of which our buildings are composed, we protect them by fixing a rod of metal connected with the ground to their highest point.

It is found by experience that a rod erected in this way protects a space all round it equal to twice its height. Thus, a rod 50 feet high protects a space of 100 feet on every side of it. From the knowledge of the principles of lightning conductors, we may know the positions of safety.

The French *paragrêles* are also other forms of lightning rods. They are small conductors, set up by means of poles in the vineyards in France, to draw off the electricity from the atmosphere over them, and thus prevent the accumulations which, when they occurred, were found to generate hailstorms. Arago proposed that these conductors should be raised and supported by small batteries,

connected by means of slender wires or chains with the ground.

This plan, like some other ingenious applications of electricity, was found to act perfectly well in theory, but proved impracticable, owing to the great expense of setting up and maintaining such a system over any great extent of country. Cases have been known in which a gold pin in a girl's hair has been fused by lightning, or a bracelet melted off a lady's wrist, without the wearer's suffering any actual injury.

Sportsmen, owing to the iron of their weapons, are apt to be struck by lightning. Hence, some philosopher—half in jest, half in earnest—has proposed that a portable lightning rod in connection with an umbrella, should be provided for people liable to be caught in thunderstorms. Such a *parapluie*, if the ferrule were provided with a pointed metallic rod projecting into the air, and connected with a detachable chain or wire to drag on the ground behind, could bring the bearer, and his paraphernalia of destruction, safely through the electric tempest, even though the lightning should play all round him.

We must keep away from the neighbourhood of bad or non-conductors, and near to good ones, if they are connected with the ground. A man clad in the steel armour of the Middle Ages would be almost perfectly safe, especially if he had steel points on his boots to stick into the ground, as he would have a capital conductor all around him. For the same reason, a man in an iron bed will be safe, especially if the bed be connected by metal to the gas-pipe, so as to make complete contact with the earth. Standing near a high body like a tree is dangerous, because electricity always rushes to the highest points; and unless the body is a better conductor than a man or woman, the electricity will strike out towards the man or woman.—*Science for All*.

A Novel Challenge.

A FEW weeks ago we reported the remarkable shooting of Dr. W. F. Carver at the Brooklyn Driving Park. A Mr. Vandyke has since criticized the doctor's performances somewhat adversely, and in reply Dr. Carver has issued the following characteristic challenge:—

"I will give to any gentleman sportsman who can on Christmas next equal the poorest exhibition I have ever given in public, shooting with Winchester rifles and shot-guns, the following prizes:—First, one thousand dollars. Second, my champion badge, valued at eight hundred dollars. Third, my champion horseback badge, worth nearly one thousand dollars. Fourth, my case of Winchester rifles, seven in number, valued at twelve hundred dollars. Fifth, three Parker shot-guns, valued at six hundred dollars. In all, prizes worth four thousand six hundred dollars.

"I do not ask any man to compete with and defeat me, but simply to be able to give a public exhibition which will prove to the satisfaction of competent judges to equal my poorest performance in public. A man to take my place must be above

an average marksman. He must be able to give a public exhibition, making to a certain extent the shots I do.

"Following is a list of shots I am making at all my exhibitions with a Winchester rifle:—First, I break from 95 to 99 glass balls out of 100, when thrown in the air. Second, I break two glass balls thrown in the air at the same time, loading the guns once while the balls are in the air, making a double shot. Third, I shoot glass balls thrown from a distance of thirty yards at or by the shooter. Fourth, I break a glass ball thrown 100 feet in the air. Fifth, I shoot a glass ball thrown square across in front of the shooter, making a cross shot. Sixth, I shoot a glass ball, the pitcher standing thirty yards distant, throwing the ball up in the air. Seventh, I shoot a glass ball thrown thirty feet in the air at a distance of thirty feet away, missing it the first three shots, loading the gun three times while the ball is in the air, and breaking it with the fourth shot before reaching the ground. Eighth, I shoot a piece of brick or stone thrown in the air, hitting it the first shot, load the gun and hit one of the broken pieces before it reaches the ground. Ninth, I shoot a picket thrown whirling in the air, cutting it in half, shooting the balls all side by side. Tenth, I shoot lead pencils thrown in the air. Eleventh, I shoot coins thrown in the air, from a trade dollar to a three-cent silver piece, hitting an average of 75 per cent., distance 30 feet. Twelfth, I shoot stationary objects from the hip from 30 to 100 feet distant, hitting 85 out of 100. Thirteenth, I shoot glass balls thrown in the air, holding the gun on my hip. Fourteenth, I shoot glass balls thrown in the air, the shooter lying on his back over a stool. In order to hold the champion badge for horseback shooting, it will be necessary to break glass balls from a horse's back, the horse running at full speed; a very fair score will be 75 out of 100, distance 21 yards.

"The above is a partial list of shots I make out of doors. When any gentleman can make those shots well enough to give a satisfactory public exhibition, I will retire, giving him my place as I propose."

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Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

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Dutch the Diver.

The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER IV.—HOME, SWEET HOME.



OR a moment there was dead silence, then Pollo spoke—

"I not sailor, sah; I de ship cook," said the black, sharply. "You mind I not put de cork in de tubum next time you go down."

"There! do you hear him?" cried Tolly. "Who's going down to be threatened like that?"

"Yah! yah! yah!" laughed the black. "Him great coward, sah. He not worf notice."

And he turned and walked forward, while Tolly resumed his suit, vacated for him by Dutch, their helmets were put on by two of the men, and diving

commenced, Dutch remaining on board till it was time to cease, and having the satisfaction of seeing a goodly portion of the copper hauled on the deck of the schooner, the divers fastening ropes round the ingots which were drawn up by the sailors.

"That was a malicious trick, of course," said Dutch to the captain while Tolly was below.

"I'm afraid it was," said the captain, "to try and make out that the machinery was out of order."

"Yes, I expected it," said Dutch; "and that's why I spoke to you. They did not mean to do me a mischief, of course—only to frighten me. I don't suspect the black, though."

"What, Pollo!" said the captain. "Good heavens, no! He's as staunch as steel. A thoroughly trustworthy man."

"I must wink at it, I suppose," said Dutch, "for it is not easy to supply vacancies in our little staff, and the fellows know it. They are hard fellows to manage."

"And yet you manage them well," said the captain, smiling. "You ought to have been a skipper."

"Think so?" said Dutch; "but look, who is this coming on board?"

"Poor John!" said the captain, with a sigh. "Poor boy, he's in a sad way."

"But he's very young, Mr. Studwick, and with the fine weather he may amend."

"He's beginning to be out of hope, Pugh, and so is poor Bessy. The doctor says he must have a sea

voyage into some warmer climate—not that he promises health, but prolonged life."

"Indeed!" said Dutch, starting, as he thought of the Cuban's proposal, and the probability of Captain Studwick having charge of the vessel if the trip was made, but not feeling at liberty to say much; and, the boat from the shore touching the side, he held his peace.

A minute later, a fine, handsome, but rather masculine girl—whose fine eyes sparkled as they lit on Dutch Pugh, and then were turned sharply away—stepped on deck, holding out her hand directly after to assist an invalid to pass the gangway, which he did, panting slightly, and then pausing to cough.

He was evidently enough the girl's brother, for with his delicate looks and hectic flush he looked strangely effeminate, and in height and stature the pair were wonderfully alike.

"I don't think it was wise of you to come out, John," said the captain, kindly; "it's a cold, thick day."

"It's so dull at home," said the young man, "and I must have change. There, I'm well wrapped up, father; and Bessy takes no end of care of me."

He gave the girl a tender and affectionate look as he spoke; and she smiled most pleasantly.

"Ah, Mr. Pugh, I'm glad to see you. Have you been down?"

"Yes, just for a little while," said Dutch, shaking hands with him, and then holding out his hand to the sister, who half shrank from him with an angry, flushed face; but his frank, pleasant look overcame her, and she held out her hand to him.

"You have not been to see us yet, Miss Studwick," he said, frankly. "Hester quite expects you to call, and I hope you will be friends."

"I will try to be, Mr. Pugh," said the girl, huskily. "I'll call—soon."

"That's right," he said, smiling. "Come, too, John. We shall be very glad to see you."

The young man started, and looked at him searchingly with his unnaturally bright eyes.

"No," he said, sadly. "I'm too much of an invalid now. That is, at present," he said, catching his father's eye, and speaking hastily. "I shall be better in a month or two. I'm stronger now—much stronger; am I not, Bessy? Give me your arm, dear. I want to see the divers."

The couple walked forward to where the air-pump was standing, and the eyes of the captain and Dutch Pugh met, when the former shook his head sadly, and turned away.

There was something very pathetic in the aspect of the young man, in whom it was plain enough to see that one by one most fatal diseases had made such inroads as to preclude all hope of recovery; and saddened at heart, for more than one reason, above all feeling that his presence was not welcome, Dutch superintended his men till, feeling that it would be absolutely necessary that some one would have to be on deck every day till the copper was all recovered, he made up his mind that it would fall to his lot, except at such times as Mr. Parkley would relieve guard.

The next morning Rasp was sent off to act as superintendent, for Mr. Parkley decided that Dutch

must stay and help him in his plans for carrying out the Cuban's wishes, if he took the affair up, and previously to discuss the matter.

Dutch announced to Rasp then that he would have to set off at once.

"It's always the way," grumbled the old fellow.

"Board that schooner, too. Yah!"

"Never mind, Rasp; you like work. You'll be like the busy bee, improving each shining hour," said Dutch, smiling.

"Yes; and my helmets, and tubes, and pumps getting not fit to be seen, and made hat pegs of. Busy bee, indeed! I'm tired of improving the shining hours. I've been all my life a-polishing of 'em up for some one else."

He set off growling, and vowing vengeance on the men if they did not work; and Dutch returned to find Mr. Parkley with a map of the West Indies spread upon the deck.

"Look here," he said, "here's the place," and he pointed to the Caribbean Sea.

"Do you think seriously of this matter, then?" said Dutch.

"Very. Why not? I believe it is genuine. Don't you?"

"I can't say," replied Dutch. "It may be."

"I think it is," said the other, sharply; "and it seems to me a chance."

"If it proved as this Cuban says, of course it would be."

"And why should it not?" said Mr. Parkley.

"You see, he has nothing to gain by getting me to fit out an expedition, unless we are successful."

"But it may be visionary."

"Those ingots were solid visions," said Mr. Parkley. "No, my lad; the thing's genuine. I've thought it out all right, and decided to go in for it at once—that is, as soon as we can arrange matters."

"Indeed, sir!" said Dutch, startled at the suddenness of the decision.

"Yes, my lad, I have faith in it. We could go in the schooner. Take a couple of those divers, and some of our newest appliances. I look upon the whole affair as a godsend. Hum! Here he is. Don't seem too eager, but follow my lead."

A clerk announced the previous night's visitor; and Dutch recalled for the moment the previous day's meeting, and the annoyance he had felt on seeing the stranger's admiring gaze. But this was all forgotten in a few moments, the Cuban being certainly all that could be desired in gentlemanly courtesy, and his manners were winning in the extreme.

"And now that you have had a night for consideration, Señor Parkley, what do you think of my project?" he said, glancing at the map.

"I want to know more," said Mr. Parkley.

"I have told you that vessels were sunk—ships laden with gold and silver, Señor Parkley, and I say join me. Find all that is wanted—a ship—divers—and make an agreement to give me half the treasure recovered, and I will take your ship to the spots. Where these are is my secret."

"You said I was slow and cold, Mr. Lorry, yesterday," said Mr. Parkley. "You sha'n't say so to-

day. When I make up my mind, I strike while the iron is hot. My mind is made up."

"Then you refuse," said the Cuban, frowning.

"No, sir, I agree. Here's my hand upon it."

He held out his hand, which the Cuban caught and pressed hastily.

"Viva!" he exclaimed, his face flushing with pleasure. "You will both be rich as princes. Our friend here goes too?"

"Yes, I shall take him with us," said Mr. Parkley.

And Dutch started round in wonder at what seemed so rash a proceeding.

"And he must share, too," said the Cuban, warmly.

"Yes; he will be my partner," said Mr. Parkley.

"And when do we start—to-morrow?"

"To-morrow!" laughed Mr. Parkley. "No, sir; it will take us a month to fit out our expedition."

"A month?"

"At least. We must go well prepared, and not fail for want of means."

"Yes, yes, that is good."

"And all this takes time. Trust me, sir, I shall not let the grass grow under my feet."

"I do not understand the grass grow," said the Cuban.

"I mean I shall hurry on the preparations," said Mr. Parkley.

The Cuban nodded his satisfaction; while the rest of the morning was spent in discussing the matter; and, though the visitor was extremely careful not to say a word that might give a hint as to the locality of the treasure, it became more and more evident that he was no empty enthusiast, but one who had spent years in the search, and had had his quest crowned with success.

Several days passed in this way, during which great success attended the raising of the copper, and a proper deed of agreement had been drawn up and duly signed between the parties to the proposed expedition, of which, however, Dutch had said but little at his own home, lest he should cause his wife, who had been delicate since their marriage, any uneasiness.

The strange fancies that had troubled him had been almost forgotten, and in spite of himself he had become somewhat tinged by the Cuban's enthusiasm, and often found himself dwelling on the pleasure of being possessed of riches such as were described.

"It would make her a lady," he argued; "and if anything happened to me, she would be above want."

He was musing in this way one morning, when Mr. Parkley came to him, they having dined together with the Cuban on the previous evening at his hotel.

"Well, Pugh," he said, "I'm getting more faith every day. Lorry's a gentleman."

"Yes," said Dutch, "he is most polished in his ways, and I must say I begin to feel a great deal of faith in him myself."

"That's well," said Mr. Parkley, rubbing his hands. "You'll have to go with us."

"I'm afraid, sir, you must—"

"Excuse you? No, I don't think I can. Besides, Pugh, you would go with me as my partner, for I shall have all that settled."

"You are very, very kind, sir," said Dutch, flushing with pleasure.

"Nonsense, man," cried Mr. Parkley; "all selfishness. You and I can do so much together. See how useful you are to me, partner."

"Not your partner yet, sir."

"Yes, you are, Pugh," said the other, slapping him on the shoulder; "and now we'll go in for calculations and arrangements for the expedition. I was thinking the schooner would do, but I find it would be too small, so I shall set Captain Studwick to look out for a good brig or a small barque, and take him into our confidence to some extent."

"Not wholly?"

"No; and yet, perhaps, it would be as well. And now, Pugh, I've got a favour to ask of you."

"Anything, sir, that I can do, I'll do with all my heart," replied Pugh, enthusiastically.

"I knew you would," said Mr. Parkley. "You see this is a big thing, my lad, and will be the making of us both, and Lorry is a very decent fellow."

"Decidedly," said Pugh, wondering at what was coming.

"Well, I must be as civil to him as I can, and so do you, of course."

"Of course."

"He's taken a great fancy to you, by the way, and praises you sky-high."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and look here, Pugh, he has got to be tired of this hotel where he is, and wants society. I can't ask him to my shabby place, so I want you to oblige me by playing the host."

Pugh started as if he had been stung.

"Nothing could be better," continued Mr. Parkley, who did not notice the other's emotion. "Ask him to come and stay at your little place. Mrs. Pugh has things about her in so nice and refined a way that you can make him quite at home. You will gain his confidence, too, and we shall work better for not being on mere hard business terms."

Dutch felt his brain begin to swim.

"I'll come as often as I can, and we shall be making him one of us. The time will pass more pleasantly for him, and there'll be no fear of somebody else getting hold of him to make better terms."

"Yes—exactly—I see," faltered Pugh, whose mind was wandering towards home, and who recalled the Cuban's openly expressed admiration for his wife.

"The dear little woman," continued Mr. Parkley, "could take him out for a drive while you are busy, and you can have music and chess in the evenings. You'll have to live better, perhaps; but mind, my dear fellow, we are not going to let you suffer for that, and you must let me send you some wine, and a box or two of cigars. We must do the thing handsomely for him."

"Yes, of course," said Dutch, vaguely.

"Quite a stranger here, you know, and by making him a friend, all will go on so much more smoothly afterwards."

"Exactly," said Dutch again.

"But how dreamy you are! What are you thinking of?"

Dutch started, for in spite of his love and trust he was thinking of the handsome Cuban being installed at his home, and always in company with his innocent young wife, while he was away busy over his daily avocations.

"I beg pardon, did I seem thinking?"

"That you did. But never mind, you'll do this for me, Pugh?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Dutch, making an effort; while the figure of the Cuban seemed to be coming like a dark shadow across his life.

"Well, yes, I do wish it, Pugh, and I am very much obliged. By the way, though, what will she say to your going out on the expedition?"

Dutch shook his head.

"By Jove, I never thought of that," said Mr. Parkley. "Poor little woman, it will be too bad. I tell you what. I was going to get old Norton to mind the business. I will not. You shall stay at home."

"I should like to go," said Pugh, quietly; "but situated as I am, I should be glad if I could stay."

"So you shall, Pugh—so you shall," said Mr. Parkley.

And nodding his head over and over again, he left Dutch to his thoughts.

He left for home that night, with the cloud seeming to darken round him. He felt that under the circumstances he was bound to accede to his partner's wishes, and yet he was about to take this man, a stranger, to his own sacred hearth, and he shuddered again and again at the ideas that forced themselves upon his brain.

"I've said I'll receive him," he said at last, half aloud; "but it is not yet too late. Hester shall decide, and if she says 'No,' why there's an end of it all."

A short run by the rail took him to his pleasant little home—a small house, almost a cottage, with its tolerably large grounds and well-kept lawn. The little dining and drawing rooms were shaded by a broad green verandah, over which the bed-room of the young couple looked down, in summer, upon a perfect nest of trailing roses.

Dutch gave a sigh of satisfaction as he saw the bright, sunny look of pleasure that greeted him, and for the next hour he had forgotten the dark shadow as he related to his young wife the great advance in their future prospects.

"I do love that dear old Mr. Parkley so," she cried, enthusiastically. "And now, Dutch, dear, tell me all about what this foreign gentleman is taking up so much of your time about. Why, darling, is anything the matter?"

Dutch sighed again, but it was with satisfaction, as with a mingling of tender love and anxiety the little woman rose, and throwing one arm round his neck, laid her soft little cheek to his.

"Matter! No, dear. Why?" he said, trying to smile.

"You looked so dull and ill all at once, as if in pain."

"Did I? Ah, it was nothing, only I was a little bothered."

"May I know what about?"

"Well, yes, dear," he said, playing with her soft hair, as he drew her down upon his knee. "The fact is that Mr. Parkley is anxious for some attention to be paid to this Cuban gentleman—this Mr. Lauré."

"And he wants us to ask him here," said Hester, gravely; and for a moment a look of pain crossed her face.

"Yes. How did you know?" he cried, startled at her words.

"I can't tell," she replied, smiling again directly.

"I seemed to know what you were going to say by instinct."

"But we cannot have him here, can we?" said Dutch, eagerly. "It would inconvenience you so."

She remained silent for a moment, and a warm flush appeared upon her face, as he gazed at her searchingly; for it was evident that a struggle was going on within her breast, and she was debating as to what she should say. Then, to his great annoyance, she replied—

"I don't think we ought to refuse Mr. Parkley this request, dear. I hardly liked the idea at first, and this Mr. Lauré did not impress me favourably when we met."

Dutch's face brightened.

"But," she continued, "I have no doubt I shall like him very much, and we will do all we can to make his stay a pleasant one."

Dutch remained silent, and a frown gathered on his brow for a few moments; but the next moment he looked up, smiling on the sweet ingenuous countenance before him, feeling ashamed of the doubts and fancies that had intruded.

"You are right, dear," he said, cheerfully. "It is a nuisance, for I don't like any one coming between us, and spoiling our evenings; but it will not be for long, and he has come about an enterprise that may bring us a considerable sum."

"I'll do all I can, dear," she cried, cheerfully.

And then, going to the piano, the tones of her voice fell upon the ears of Dutch Pugh even as the melodies of David on the troubled spirit of Saul of old, for as the young husband lay back in his chair, and listened to his favourite songs, sung it seemed to him more sweetly than ever, the tears gathered in his eyes, and he closed them, feeling that the evil spirit that assailed his breast had been exorcised, and that the cruel doubts and fears were bitter sins against a pure, sweet woman, who loved him with all her soul; and he cursed his folly as he vowed that he never again would suffer such fancies to gain an entrance to his breast.

For quite an hour they sat thus, she singing in her soft, low voice, ballad after ballad that she knew he loved; and he lying back there, dreamily drinking in the happiness that was his, and thanking Heaven for his lot. For the shadow was beaten back, and true joy once more reigned supreme.

He was roused from his delicious reverie by the touch of two soft, warm lips on his forehead.

"Asleep, darling?" whispered Hester.

"Asleep? No," he cried in a low, dull voice, as

he drew her to his heart. "Awake, darling—wide awake to the fact that I am the happiest of men in owning all your tender, true, womanly love."

As he spoke his lips sought hers, and with a sigh of content, and a sweet smile lighting up her gentle face, Hester's arms clasped his neck, and she nestled closer to his breast.

CHAPTER V.—A WAKING DREAM.

THE next day, after a long and busy discussion, in which Laure took eager interest, and during which plans were made as to stores, arms for protection against the Indians of the coast they were to visit, lifting and diving apparatus, and the like, the Cuban was installed at the cottage, and that first night Dutch saw again upon his face that intense admiration the dark, warm-blooded southerner felt for the fair young English girl. For girl she still was, with a girl's ways, prettily mingled with her attempts to play the part of mistress of her own house. The young husband felt a pang of jealous misery await him as he sat back in the shade of his prettily-furnished drawing room, seeing their visitor hover about the piano while Hester sang, paying endless attentions with the polish and courtesy of a foreigner, various little refined acts, being such as would never have occurred to the bluff young Englishman.

"I'm a jealous fool—that's what I am," said Dutch to himself; "and if I go on like this I shall be wretched all the time he is here. I won't have it—I won't believe it. She's beautiful, God bless her! and no man could see her without admiring her. I ought to be proud of his admiration, instead of letting it annoy me; for, of course, it's his foreign way of showing it. An Englishman would be very different; but what right have I to fancy for a moment that this foreign gentleman, my guest, would harbour a thought that was not honourable to me? There, it's all gone."

He brightened up directly; and as, with a pleasant smile, Laura came to him soon afterwards and challenged him to a game of chess, the evening passed pleasantly away.

The days glided on rapidly enough, with Dutch Pugh always repeating to himself the stern reproof that he was unjust to his guest and to his young wife to allow a single thought of ill to enter his heart; and to keep these fancies away he worked harder than ever at the preparations for the voyage, being fain, though, to confess that one thing that urged him on was the desire to be rid of his guest.

"I don't think much of these furren fellows," said Rasp, one day, when, after a shorter stay than usual at the offices, Laure had effusively pressed Dutch's hand and gone back to the cottage. "How does Mrs. Pug like him?"

Dutch started, but said, quietly—

"Suppose we get on with the packing of that air-pump, Rasp. You had better get in a couple of the men."

"All right," grumbled the old fellow, "I wasn't going to leave it undone; but if I was a married man with a 'ansum wife, 'ang me if I should care about having a smooth-tongued, dark-eyed, scented foreign monkey of a chap like that at my house."

"You insolent old scoundrel!" cried Dutch, flashing into a rage; and he caught the old fellow by the throat, and loosened him again with an impatient "Pish!"

"Just at that," said Rasp, in an ill-used tone, and seizing the poker, he sent the red-hot cinders flying as he stoked away at the fire.

"I desire that you never speak to me again like that. How dare you!"

"Ah, all right, Mr. Pug, I won't speak again," said Rasp. "I didn't mean no offence. I only said what I thought, and that was as I didn't like to see that furren chap always a-banging after going back to your house, when he ought to be here, helping to see to the things getting ready."

"Rasp!" said Dutch, angrily.

"Well, so he ought to, instead of being away. Nobody wants him to take off his yaller kid gloves and work, but he might look on. He's going to be a niste one, he is, when he gets out in the place where we're a-going. He'll have a hammock slung, and a hawning over it when we gets out in the hot sunshine, that's about what he'll do, and lie on his back and smoke cigarettes while one works. Say, Mr. Pug, I wish you was going with us!"

He went and had another stoke at the fire, and glanced at Dutch's back, for he was writing, and made no response.

"Sulky, and won't speak," muttered Rasp; and, going out, banged the door after him.

"The fancies of a vulgar mind," said Dutch to himself, as soon as he was alone. "The coarse thoughts of one who cannot understand the purity of feeling and thought of a true woman; and I actually let such thoughts have a place in my breast. Bah! It's disgraceful!"

He glanced round the office, and then angrily devoted himself once more to his work, for it seemed as if the great goggle-eyed diving helmets were once more bending forward and laughing at him derisively.

"I will not have this office made so hot," he muttered impatiently; and he worked on for some time, but only to fall dreaming again, as he said, "A little more than a fortnight and we shall be ready. Good luck to the expedition. I wish it were gone."

Then, in spite of himself, he began thinking about the conduct of Lauré at his house, and wishing earnestly that he had never agreed to his reception as a guest.

"But, there, he is a perfect gentleman," he argued; "and his conduct to me is almost too effusive. Little Hester must find him all that could be desired, or she would complain. Hallo, who is this?"

"Company to see you," said Rasp, roughly; and, as Dutch left his stool, it was to meet Captain Studwick's invalid son and his sister, who came in, accompanied by a quiet, gentlemanly-looking young man, whom he introduced as Mr. Meldon.

"The medical gentleman who attends me now," said John Studwick, smiling; "not that I want much, do I, Mr. Meldon?"

"Well, no, we will not call you an invalid, Mr. Studwick," said the stranger.

"Fact is," said John Studwick, "I've set up a

medical man of my own. Mr. Meldon is going with us on the voyage."

"What voyage?" said Dutch, eagerly.

"Oh, you don't know, of course," said John Studwick, laughing. "My father thinks a sea voyage will set me right, and I am going in the *Sea King*. Bessy's going too."

"Indeed," said Dutch, looking from one to the other, while Bessy coloured slightly, and turned away.

"Yes, it's just settled this morning. Mr. Parkley is willing, so we shall have a sea voyage and adventure too. I say, Mr. Pugh, you asked me to come to your house."

"Yes, and I shall be very glad," said Dutch, smiling.

"Well, we can't quite fix a day when we can be introduced to this Spanish Cuban gentleman. I'm curious to know my fellow-passenger. Sick man's fancy."

"Thursday week, then," said Dutch, eagerly. "Mr. Meldon, perhaps, will join us."

"I shall be very happy," replied that individual.

And he glanced at Bessy, who coloured again slightly; and then, after a few words about the voyage, in which John Studwick expressed his regret that Dutch was not going on the expedition, the little party went away.

"If I'm not mistaken," said Dutch to himself, as he climbed to his stool, "there's somebody there to heal the sore place in poor Bessy's heart. Poor girl! If I was not coxcombical to say so, I should think she really was fond of me. Then come forth, little loadstone," he said, with a look of intense love lighting up his countenance, and raising the lid of his desk he took from a little drawer a photographic carte of his wife, and set it up before him, to gaze at it fondly.

"I don't think I could have cared for Bessy Studwick, darling, even if there had been no Hester in the world."

As he gazed tenderly at the little miniature of his wife's features, there seemed to come a peculiar look in the eyes—the expression on the face became one of pain.

He knew it was fancy, but he gazed on at the picture till his imagination took a wider leap, and as if it were quite real, so real that in his disturbed state he could not have declared it untrue, he saw Hester seated in their own room, with every object around clearly defined, her head bent forward, and the Cuban kneeling at her feet, and pressing her hands to his lips.

So real was the scene that he started away from the desk with a loud cry, oversetting his stool, and letting the heavy desk lid fall with a crash.

In a moment Rasp ran into the office, armed with a heavy diver's axe, and then stood staring in amazement.

"Is any one gone mad?" he growled.

"It was nothing, Rasp," said Dutch, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

"I never heard nothing make such a row as that afore," growled Rasp.

And then putting the axe down, he made for the

poker, had a good poke at the fire, and went out muttering.

Dutch opened the desk on the instant, but the scene was gone, and hastily closing the lid again he began to pace the room.

For the moment his intention was to rush off home, but he restrained himself for the time, and tried to recall the past; but his brain was in a whirl. At last he grew more calm, and took out his watch.

"Only five o'clock," and he had said that he should get some dinner where he was, stop late at work, and not be home till after nine.

He was to stay there and work for another three or four hours—to make calculations that required all his thought, when he had seen or conjured up that dreadful sight. No; he could not bear it. His nerves tingled, his brain was throbbing, and incipient madness seemed to threaten his reason, as he prepared to obey the influence that urged him to go home.

"The villain!" he groaned. "It must be a warning. Heaven help me, I will know the worst."

CHAPTER VI.—A PLEASANT EVENING.

DUTCH PUGH seized his hat and coat, and was about to dash into the street, when the remembrance of that evening before the coming of the Cuban came upon him, and he replaced them.

"Stop a moment," he said, hoarsely, as he began to walk up and down once more. "Let me think—let me take matters coolly, or I shall go mad. There, there, this will not do. I'm going up and down here like a wild beast in his cage."

He made an effort, and forced himself to sit down.

"Now," he said, "let's see. What does this mean? Here am I, a strong, full-blooded, sane man, and what have I been doing?"

He paused for a moment before answering his question.

"Letting my mind dwell on thoughts that are a disgrace to me, till I imagine—yes, imagine—so vividly that it seems real, all that nonsense. I picture the scene, I magnify a simple piece of cardboard, and make it fit my own vile imaginations till I see what could never have taken place; and on the strength of that, what am I going to do? Why, rush off home as jealous and mad as an Othello, ready to distort everything I see, believe what does not exist, and generally play such a part as I should repent to my last day. Poor girl! has it come to this, that I cannot trust you, and am going to play the spy upon your actions?"

"No, hang me if I do. Now, look here, Dutch, this is not manly," he continued, catechising himself. "You are foolishly jealous of that man, are you not?"

"Yes," he said, answering his own question.

"Now, then, why are you jealous? Has your wife ever given you the slightest cause?"

"Never, so help me Heaven."

"There, then, does not that satisfy you? Why, man, if every one who has a handsome wife were to act like this, what a world we should have. So much, then, for your wife. Now, then, about this man—what of him? He is polished and refined,

and pays your wife attentions. Well, so would any foreigner under the circumstances. Shame, man, shame. He is your guest; the guest, too, of a woman whose truth you know—whose whole life is beyond suspicion. You leave her every day to go here or there, and does she ask you where you have been—what you have done? Does she suspect you? Why, Dutch Pugh, you wretched maniac, if she saw you talking to a score of pretty women how would she act? I'll tell you. She'd open those sweet, candid eyes of hers, and beam upon you, and no more doubt your truth than that of Heaven.

"And I'll not doubt yours, darling," he muttered, going to the desk, taking out the photograph, kissing it before putting it back; and then, tightening his lips, he took his seat, fixed his attention upon his work, and grew so intent that the next time he looked at his watch it was close upon nine, when, in a calm, matter-of-fact way, he walked all the way home.

In spite of his determination, he could not help seeing that Hester looked pale and troubled when he entered the little drawing-room, and that her manner was strange and constrained. She met his gaze in a timid way, and, without doubt, her hand trembled.

He would not notice her, though; but began chatting to them, Lauré being in the highest of spirits, and relating anecdotes of his travels till Dutch felt in the best of spirits, and it was near midnight when they all rose for bed, Hester looking very pallid—so much so that Dutch noticed it.

"Are you quite well, dear?" he asked.

She raised her eyes, and was about to speak, when she caught Lauré's eyes fixed upon her in a strange manner, and she replied hastily—

"Oh, yes, dear, quite—quite well."

"You don't feel any of your old symptoms?"

"Oh, no," she replied, smiling. "You are so anxious about me."

"No wonder," said Lauré, "with such a pearl of a wife. Well, I must to bed. Good night, dear host and hostess."

He advanced to Hester Pugh and kissed her hand, turning directly to Dutch, and pressing his so affectionately that the young Englishman returned the grip with such interest that the Cuban winced, and then smiled as he saw in Dutch's eyes how honest and true was the intent.

"I was sorry to be detained to-night," continued Dutch, frankly; "it must be very dull here. Look here, Hester, I've asked John Studwick and his sister, and Mr. Meldon, a doctor, to dinner on Thursday. Send a letter to Miss Studwick yourself, and ask Mr. Parkley as well, so as to have a pleasant evening."

Hester Pugh brightened up directly, and began to talk of the arrangements for the dinner, while the Cuban went off with a peculiar smile upon his face.

"But I don't know what to say about this, Dutch," said Hester playfully, as she made an effort to be gay, and shake off the lassitude that seemed to oppress her. "Report says, sir, that Miss Bessy Studwick was very fond of a certain gentleman we know."

"Poor Bessy!" said Dutch, thoughtfully.

"Poor Bessy, sir. Then it was all true?"

"What, about Bessy Studwick, darling? Well, I think it was. It sounds conceited of me to say so, but I believe it was the case. But," he added, drawing her to him, "this certain gentleman only had one heart, and a certain lady took possession of it all. Hester, my darling, I never in my life had loving thoughts about more than one woman, and her I love more dearly every day."

She closed her eyes, and the tears gathered beneath her lids, as he pressed her to his heart and sighed gently.

Miss Studwick's name was mentioned no more that night.

The time passed quickly away, and the Thursday came. Dutch had been so fully occupied, and so determined not to listen to the promptings of his fancy, as he called it, that he refused to take any notice of the way in which the Cuban had settled down at his house. From being all eager now to get the expedition fitted out, and ready to be pettish and impatient with Mr. Parkley and Dutch for their careful, deliberate preparations, he seemed now quite careless, pleading indisposition and spending the greater part of his time at the cottage.

The dinner passed off most pleasantly, and the table was made bright by the magnificent flowers the Cuban had purchased as his offering to the feast, and by the rich fruit Mr. Parkley had added in his rough, pleasant way, coming down to the cottage with a heavy basket on his arm, and smiling all round as he dabbed his face and head, hot with the exertion.

To the great delight of Dutch, he saw that quite a liking had sprung up between his wife and Bessy Studwick, both evidently trying hard to let him see that they indulged in no thoughts of the past, while the Cuban ceased his attentions to Hester, and, taking Bessy down to dinner, heaped his foreign, nameless little results of polish upon the tall, Juno-like maiden.

The only person in the party who looked grave was John Studwick, who watched all this with uneasy glances, though it must be said that he seemed just as much annoyed when Mr. Meldon, the young doctor, was speaking to his sister. He lacked no attentions, though, himself; for, compassionating the state of the invalid's health, both Dutch and Hester tried hard to make the meeting pleasant to him.

"The little wife looks ill, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley, as they went in to dinner. "You ask Mr. Meldon his opinion about her by and by. Our coming worries her."

"I'll ask her if she's poorly or worried," said Dutch, smiling. "Hester!"

She came up to him looking pale and startled, but he did not notice it.

"Mr. Parkley thinks you wish all the visitors anywhere," said Dutch, playfully.

"He does not," said Hester, placing her hand on Mr. Parkley's arm. "He knows he is always so very welcome here."

She went in with him to dinner, and evidently exerted herself greatly to chase away the cloud that shadowed her, devoting herself to her guests; but

in spite of her efforts, her eyes were more than once directed partially to where Lauré was chatting volubly with Bessy Studwick, and, meeting his, remained for a few moments as if fascinated or fixed by his gaze.

Later on in the evening, when they were all in the drawing-room, Hester seemed quite excited, and full of forced gaiety, while Lauré was full of anecdote, chatting more volubly than ever. Before long he was asked to sing, and Hester sat down to the piano.

While he was singing, in a low, passionate voice, some Spanish love song, and those near were listening as if enthralled, Dutch felt his arm touched, and John Studwick motioned him to follow into the back drawing-room, and then, seeing it was impossible to speak there, Dutch led the way into the little dining-room, where, with the rich tones of the Cuban's voice penetrating to where they stood, the invalid, who seemed greatly excited, caught his host by the arm.

"Dutch Pugh," he said, "I like you because you're so frank and manly, and that's why I speak. I sha'n't go out with this expedition if that half-Spanish fellow is going too. I hate him. Look how he has been pestering Bessy all the evening. I don't like it. Why did you ask him here?"

"My dear fellow," exclaimed Dutch, "be reasonable. You expressed a wish to meet him."

"So I did. Yes, so I did; but I don't like him now. I don't like his ways. Pugh, if I was a married man, I would not have that fellow in my house for worlds."

"My dear John Studwick," said Dutch, uneasily, "this is foolish. He is a foreigner, and it is his way."

"I don't like his way," cried the young man, whose cheeks were flushed and eyes unnaturally bright. "If he won Bessy from me I should kill him. I was afraid of you once, but that's passed now."

"But, my dear boy," said Dutch, laying his hand on his shoulder, "you must expect your sister to form an attachment some day."

"Yes, some day," said the young man—"some day; but let her wait till I'm gone. I couldn't bear to have her taken from me now. She is everything to me."

"My dear Studwick, don't talk like that."

"Why not?" he replied, with a strange look. "Do you think I don't know? I shall only live about six months: nothing will save me."

"Nonsense, man! That sea trip will set you right again. Come, let's get back into the drawing-room."

He led the way back, and, seeking his opportunity, whispered to Bessy Studwick that her brother was low-spirited, and taking her from the Cuban's side, he made John Studwick happy by bringing her to him.

The Cuban's eyes flashed, and he arose and crossed the room, so that when Dutch looked in that direction it was to see that he whispered something to Hester, who glanced across at him where he was standing by Bessy.

The next minute he was seized by Mr. Parkley, who backed him up into a corner, where he seized

one particular button on the young man's breast, a habit he had, going to the same particular button as a small pig seeks the same single spot when in search of nutriment.

"Dutch," said Mr. Parkley, as soon as they were alone, and while he was busily trying with his left hand to screw the button off, "Dutch, shake hands."

The young man did so, wonderingly.

"That's right; no one's looking. That chap's going to sing another song, and little Hester's getting ready the music. See here, Dutch—you won't be offended at what I say?"

"Offended? Absurd!"

"Old tried, staunch friend, you know. Wouldn't say a word to hurt you, and I love that little girl of yours like a father—just as if she was my own flesh and blood."

"And I'm sure Hester loves and respects you, Mr. Parkley."

"Yes, yes, of course; and that's what makes me so wild about it."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Parkley," said Dutch, uneasily.

"There, that's what I was afraid of when I spoke. But I must say it now, Pugh. I'm afraid I made a mistake in asking you to invite that Cuban here. I'll ask him to come and stay with me."

"Indeed, I beg you will do no such thing, Mr. Parkley," said Dutch, hotly, as his face burned with mortification. "I understand what you mean, sir, and can assure you that your suspicions are unjust."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so, Pugh, I am indeed," said Mr. Parkley, earnestly. "Don't be angry with me, my dear boy. I'm getting old—stupid, I suppose. There, don't take any more notice of what I said."

Under these circumstances, it was hard work for Dutch Pugh to preserve an unclouded face before his guests, but he strove hard—the harder that he was annoyed at people for having the same fancies as those he had tried so hard to banish. It was, then, with no small feeling of pleasure that he welcomed the time when his guests departed; but even then he was not to be spared a fresh wound, for on taking Bessy Studwick down to the fly, she said to him, in a low voice—

"Dutch, I have been trying so hard to-night to love your wife. I do so hope you will be very happy."

"Thank you, Bessy, thank you," he said, warmly. "I'm sure you wish me well."

"I do, I do, indeed," she whispered earnestly; "and therefore I say I do not like your new friend, that foreign gentleman. He is treacherous; I am sure he is. Good night."

"Good night!" said Dutch to himself, as he stood on the gravel path, with the gate in his hand, listening to the departing wheels; and then, in spite of his determination, the flood of evil fancies came rolling back, sweeping all before it.

"They all see it, and think me blind," he groaned, as he literally reeled against the gate. "Those thoughts, then, were a warning—one I would not heed. Hester—Hester—my love!" he moaned, as he pressed his hands to his forehead. "Oh, my God, that it should come to this!"

He stood leaning against the gate-post for a few

minutes, in a stunned, dazed way; but recovering himself, he clenched his hands, and exclaimed through his teeth—

"I will not believe it. She could not be so false."

He strode in, apparently quite calm, to find Hester standing by the fireplace, looking very scared and pale; while Lauré, who had thrown himself back upon the couch, began to laugh in a peculiar way.

"Ah, you English husbands," he said, banteringly, "how you do forsake your beautiful wives. But, there, the fair visitor was very sweet and gracious. I almost fell in love myself."

Dutch Pugh's eyes flashed for a moment, but he said nothing, only glanced at his wife, who met his looks in a troubled way, and then let her eyes fall to the carpet; while Lauré went on talking in a playful, bantering manner.

From that night a complete change seemed to have come upon the home of Dutch Pugh. He had more than once determined upon putting an end to the Cuban's stay, feeling at the same time as if he would like to end his life; but reason told him that his were, after all, but suspicions, and that perhaps they were unjust. Under the circumstances, he sought for relief in work, and strove night and day to perfect the arrangements which now fast approached completion. Captain Studwick was to be in command of the large yacht-like schooner that had been secured and was being carefully fitted with the necessaries in stores and machinery. Two of the divers engaged in raising the copper had volunteered to go, and a capital crew had been selected. The cabins were comfortably furnished, there being plenty of space, and places were set apart for the captain's son and daughter, while a gentleman friend—a naturalist—had, on learning from Captain Studwick the part of the world to which the ship was to sail, petitioned hard, and obtained permission to go.

This last gentleman said his object was to collect specimens of the wonderful birds of Central America; but the probabilities are that if he had not been aware that Bessy Studwick was to be of the party, he, being a very bad sailor, would have stayed at home.

By degrees everything necessary was put on board the handsome vessel, and though the ship's destination was kept a secret, and the real object of her mission confided to few, she formed the general topic of conversation in the port, and plenty of exaggerations flew about.

The energetic way in which Dutch worked served to lull to a certain extent the sense of pain that he endured, but he suffered bitterly; and at last it had come to this, that he spent as little of his time at home as possible, returning there, however, at night, faint and weary, but with a heart-sickness that drove away the needful sleep.

It afforded him some gratification, though, to find that Miss Studwick often called at his home; and when, on more than one occasion, she came with her brother to the office, he read in her eyes the deep sympathy that she felt for him, and asked himself why he had not made this woman his wife.

(To be continued.)

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XXX.—LUCY'S REST.

NIGHT after night, noticed by the curate during his wanderings, by *ma mère*, and by Mr. William Jarker, birdcatcher, when distant trips had detained him until late hours, there still burned a feeble light in one of the windows at Bennett's-rents; and by its gleam, until the moon rose above the houses, and looked inquisitively down upon her paper, shedding a silvery light that seemed to quench the rushlight's yellow flame, now sat Lucy Grey far into the long watches, with nought to interrupt her but the occasional long-drawn breath or sigh from the back room, or the rumble of some vehicle through the distant streets. Once she started up and stood trembling, for a shrill scream rang upon the night breeze, but silence soon reigned again, and she retook her seat. Patiently bending over her task, with her large, eager eyes strained to follow the work of her fingers, the pale girl was busily toiling on. Toiling on at what? Not at the sewing machine, for its busy throbbing pulse was still, but carefully and slowly writing line after line in a common school copy-book to improve a hand-writing already fine, delicate, and ladylike. A slate covered with figures lay too upon the table, while beside it was a French grammar, and the words written in the copybook were in the same tongue.

And this had been Lucy's task night after night, till the red-rimmed eyes would keep open no longer, and, wearied out, she lay down to dream dreams that brought smiles to her lips, for her visions were of the prize for which she studied. But these nights of toil, and the anxiety of her heart, had told upon her; and upon this night, the one succeeding the journey to Finsbury, Lucy sat, looking more pale and wan than usual, and her work progressed but slowly. The place, too, and the summer heat, had had their share in producing her sickly pallor, for in Bennett's-rents there was a faint, lung-clinging odour that almost seemed to tell that Death had passed over the place to put his seal upon those soon to pass away. Or was it the foul incense men burn to his dread shrine, calling him to their homes—the thin invisible mist rising from filth and rottenness, to blight the rosy cheek of health? There was enough in Bennett's-rents to drive away health, strength, and youth; for premature old age lurked in the foul cisterns, rose from the drains, and dwelt in the crowded habitations—houses made to accommodate six, yet containing perhaps thirty or forty souls. But Lucy was sick at heart as well. Months upon months had she dwelt in the wretched court, though until now its impurities had not seemed to touch her as she passed to and fro.

The work went on slowly, and, weary and sad at heart, she stopped at times, gazing up at the bright moon, till, recalling her wandering thoughts, she again bent eagerly to her task. Still, her thoughts would not be controlled, and soon the slate took the place of the paper, and her pencil formed two words over which she bent lovingly, and yet with a shudder, as if it were ominous to her hopes that she had written these words, for the pencil gritted loudly

over the slate, and the last stroke was made with a harsh grating shriek which sounded loudly in the silence of the night. Still she bent lovingly over the characters, until, drip, drip, drip, the tears fell upon them; and then, as her white forehead sank upon her hands, the long gleaming clusters of her bright hair swept over the slate, and the words were gone, while the girl wept long and bitterly, for her dream of the future seemed rudely broken—that happy dream of her life whose rosy hues had served to soften the misery of her lot. Toiling hard by day to supply the wants of her suffering mother, working by night to make herself more worthy—to raise herself if but a step nearer to him; and now it seemed to her that she had been roughly dashed from the point to which she had climbed, by the words and looks of a low ruffian whose very presence was repelling.

Suddenly Lucy raised her head, for the night was hot, and the window open, and in the stillness of the hour she heard approaching footsteps—steps that she seemed to know, and her pulses beat tumultuously as they appeared to stop at the end of the court for a few minutes, and then pass on; when, as if a weight had been removed from her heart, the poor girl sighed, breathed more freely, and again bent over her books.

An hour passed, and then once more Lucy looked up; for, clear and sharp, "tap, tap, tap," came the sound as of something hard, a tiny shot, a pebble striking against the window panes, and then once more there was silence.

Lucy rose softly, her cheeks pale and lips apart, and stole on tiptoe to the door of the back room and listened.

All was silent there but the heavy breathing of sleepers; so she again crossed the room, and, with the nail of one finger, gave a sharp tap upon the pane, then hastily tying on her bonnet and drawing on a shawl, she once more stood trembling, and eagerly listening at the back room, her pale young face wearing a strange, frightened expression, and then slowly and softly she stole to the door, opened it quietly, and closed it again, to stand outside upon the dark landing, gazing fearfully up and down, as if in dread of being molested.

Slowly down she then passed step by step, with the old worn boards now and again creaking sharply beneath her light weight, every rustle of her dress sounding loud and distinct in the silence—down slowly to the dark passage and the front door, left always on the latch for the convenience of the many lodgers. And now Lucy's heart beat heavily, for she had passed along the entry in an agony of fear, lest she might encounter some one sleeping upon the floor, for at times homeless ones had stolen in and rested there, glad of such a refuge from the night wind.

But Lucy stood at the door in safety, and raised the latch. The paint cracked loudly as the door opened, and admitted the faint light of moon and lamp, while now the wind sighed mournfully down the court. The next moment the door was closed, and a dark figure had seized Lucy by the hand, and drawn her towards one of the many gloomy entrances, as the heavy step of a policeman was heard

to pass the end of the court, his ringing paces gradually growing fainter, till once more all was still but the moaning sigh of the night wind, as it seemed at times almost to wait for the miseries of Bennett's-rents.

A quarter of an hour, half an hour, an hour passed; but, save the occasional rattle of wheels in the great thoroughfare, all was silent. The many doorways in Bennett's-rents seemed to frown darkly and mysteriously as the one lamp flickered, while, where the moonbeams did not fall, there were gloomy shadows. But at last came the light step of Lucy and the soft rustle of her dress as she crept up to the door, passed through to steal once more up the creaking stairs, to throw off bonnet and shawl, and sit down panting and trembling, her breath coming hardly for a while, till tears came to her relief, when she wept long and bitterly, the heavy booming of a neighbouring clock sending a shudder through her frame.

Now pushing back her hair from her forehead, she looked out angrily upon the night, now drooping and weeping bitterly, her head again sank upon her hands as the tears of hopeless misery gushed from her eyes. The moonbeams shed their silvery lustre upon her head as she bent there, playing amidst the riches of her beautiful hair, caressing it, hiding and glancing from amidst the thick tresses, lingering there, and seeming to shed a halo around. But slowly the radiant orb rode on till but half the bright tresses were in the light, and still slowly the shadows increased as the rays swept by, flooding first one and then another part of the room. Soon all within was darkness, while the court was light; and then slowly the shadow began to climb the houses on the other side, making their dingy walls less loathsome as seen through the silvery medium. But before the lower part of the court was quite in darkness, a heavy, slouching figure might have been seen to creep up to the house on the opposite side and enter the door. A few minutes after, Lucy Grey started and listened, for, in the strange stillness of the time, a rustling was heard upon the stairs, followed by a faint but laboured breathing; while, though her light was extinguished, Lucy crouched trembling in her chair, for it seemed to her that she had been watched, and that even now there was a piercing eye at the keyhole, which fixed her to her seat so that she dare not move. But at last, from sheer exhaustion, her fair young head drooped lower and lower towards the table, sinking upon her shapely arms; when once more came the rumble of a vehicle in the street, the heavy tread of the policeman upon the pavement—this time right along the court—in firm, ringing steps, that gave wrongdoers ample notice of his coming, and then again silence.

They were wild dreams that made fevered the sleep of Lucy Grey. Now it was Arthur Sterne; now *ma mère* and her son, or the low, bull-dog face of Jarker, that disturbed her rest; and she moaned in her sleep again and again as the night wore on. The writing upon her slate was gone; the copies were blurred and tear-blistered, and the poor girl slept heavily and painfully. Now she sighed, now she started, for her heart was rent and torn—as

gentle a heart as ever beat in woman's breast; but, like a blight, the breath of suspicion had rested on her, and she had shrunk back scathed before the man for whose coming it had been the pleasure of her life to watch.

What was there to live for now? she asked herself again and again. Was life to be only a dreary blank—a struggle for mere existence? And then she blamed herself for her folly and ambition. Had Arthur Sterne never crossed the light of her life she could have patiently toiled on, never wearying of the complaints of her mother; but now, after months, almost years of hopefulness, to come to this! Well might the sleep be fitful, and the dreams those which brought trouble; for the sun of her life seemed clouded, and hope a thing of the past.

Again a sigh, and a few muttered words, and then the weary head was turned a little, so that when the first grey dawn of the coming day crept down the court and struggled into the room, driving forth shadow after shadow, it rested smilingly upon Lucy's cheek, pausing lovingly upon the first pure thing it had encountered that morning in the misery-smitten region around. Had Arthur Sterne known all, he would have given position, advancement, all, to have pressed his lips where the pale light now rested, and asked for pardon. But he knew only that which he had seen, and, racked by suspicion, he wearied himself with doubt and surmise without end.

Again a sigh, and again a restless turn, when the colour flushed through Lucy's pale cheeks. It was sunrise, and some hopeful thoughts must have come with its brightness; or was it that the words breathed far off above the rushing river had at length reached their goal? But the cheeks soon paled again, the sigh was repeated, and Lucy slept heavily.

"Tsu weet, tsu weet, tsweet, tsweet, tsweet!" sang in long and joyous trill the speckled-breasted lark, as, raising its crest and the plumage of its throat, it fluttered by the prison-bars, and poured forth that joyous song whose every note told of bright skies, pure air, and the daisy-sprinkled mead; of waving corn-fields, rippling brooks, and many-tinted woods. "Tsweet, tsweet, tsweet!" sang the bird of the joyous heart-stirring song, prisoned here in a foul court, but panting for the elastic air and some loving mate.

Lucy started up, and looked confusedly round; then, gazing towards the sky, she became conscious that Mr. William Jarker was upon the housetop, amongst his pigeons and sooty lathen architecture, gazing heavily down upon her window. There was a frown upon her brow as she slowly and wearily put aside books and slate, bathed her throbbing temples, and smoothed the escaped locks; and then she stole softly to the corner of the window, where, unseen from above, she could lean her cheek against the paintless frame, and listen to the song of the bird. Sighing heavily as it ceased, she uncovered her sewing machine, wiped off the dust, and prepared her work for the coming day. Now she had to cross the room and make sundry little domestic arrangements; now to seek here, now there; but all was done silently, so as not to rouse the sleepers in the next room; though there was none of the old

elasticity, for she moved about wearily, sighing as she went.

And now, first one and then another familiar sound told her that the time for labour—that morning was there once more; many steps were heard descending the stairs and passing along the court, the cooing of the pigeons came from the housetops, and the rattle of vehicles rose more loudly from the distant streets.

"Up and dressed, Lucy?" said a voice from the adjoining room.

"Yes, mother dear," was the reply; and now, after waiting some time for this signal, the wheel spun round, the keen needle darted up and down, and with its sharp click, click, click, sped on Lucy's sewing machine.

Then the bed-room door opened, and Septimus Hardon made his appearance—a worn expression struggling hard with the smile that greeted Lucy, as he tenderly kissed her; and then, hurrying out, he went for his morning walk, to puzzle over his own weakness, his poverty, and the great problem of things in general.

CHAPTER XXXI.—IN HOSPITAL.

THE more a poor and sensitive man confines himself within doors, the more he troubles himself with the fancy that every one he meets is staring at and watching him when he stirs out; and this fancy was very strong on Septimus Hardon one day—one very miserable, sloppy, wet day—as he made his way towards Lower Serle's-place, on account of dilapidations in his boots.

Now, experience has taught that holes or seediness generally of the other apparel may to a certain extent be managed, and something like a decent appearance made: the hat may be sponged and ironed, while the brown, napless spots are inked, and the bruises, to a certain extent, rubbed out; holes in the coat may be fine-drawn, and a vigorous brushing will always do something towards renovating the nap, even as soap and flannel will remove the grease; then, too, a good button-up, and a paper collar neatly arranged beneath a clean face and shortly-cut hair, give a finish to a costume by no means rare in London streets. It is only when in company with dirt and squalor that long hair shows to its greatest advantage; and if the hair be long, vain are the efforts made to reform a shabby garb. Your artist may fancy he paints the better by saving the sixpences that should by rights find their way into the pocket of the man of the long tongue and sharp scissors; your poet with rolling eye may also find some hidden advantage, some Samson-like strength, in flowing locks; and no doubt Italian liberty would suffer, and Vaterland be blotted and wiped out, if from foreign heads much of the collar-greasing, eye-offending, cheek-tickling appendage were shorn off. We know how the strength of the old judge lay in his locks; and when we meet some brawny, hirsute fellow, we are apt to consider him a very Hercules of strength; but when we encounter long hair in a state of wealth, petted, perfumed, and glossed, after the fashion of the dandies of the Merry Monarch's time, how the mind will feel disposed to look upon the owner of

the flowing locks, not as a star of the intellectual sphere, but as a comet of weak intensity; while, when the same lengthy locks are met with in a state of poverty, even the short prison-barber coiffure of the Jarker kind seems preferable.

Taught by adversity, Septimus Hardon had learned to contend with the dilapidations in his clothes—at times quite ingeniously—but, like far better men, he had not been able to control his boots. Custom has so much to do with matters of dress, that though shabbiness will pass unnoticed in the throng, any departure from the ordinary laws will draw as much attention to the offender as if he were a visitor from some foreign clime. Sandalshoon were, of course, once the correct thing for promenading the crust of the earth; but who now, unless he were an extreme Ritualist, would think of traversing our muddy streets with bare feet strapped to a sole, and great-toes working in a most obtrusive manner? Certainly not a man of Septimus Hardon's retiring disposition; though, had he felt so disposed, he could not have done so in the present instance, since his boots almost lacked soles. Their decay had been so rapid, that scarcely anything remained but the uppers. He had even taken to wear his wife's goloshes, until the policeman became more attentive to his quiet footfall than was agreeable. But there is a stretch beyond which even the elasticity of india-rubber will not extend; and now, after putting up with much hard usage, the goloshes had succumbed, and, suffering under a complete reverse of circumstances, the india-rubber was itself completely rubbed out.

As before said, there are many little contrivances for bettering worn costume; but, somehow or another, a boot bothers the cleverest. String is a wonderful adjunct to garments generally, often acting as a substitute for buttons or braces—in fact, for a man wrecked on a desert island, there would not be the slightest cause for despair so long as he had string; but even it falls powerless before boots. Glue is useless from the damp; while as to paste, it is no better than sealing-wax or gum. Taken altogether, boots are a great nuisance to a poor man; and when they have arrived at such a pitch that they are not worth mending, the best plan to adopt is not to throw them away, or offer them up as an odorous sacrifice to the goddess of poverty upon your household fire, watching their life-like contortions as the leather twists and turns in the hot blaze, but to do as Septimus Hardon did, with many a sigh, as though they had been old friends—sell them.

Septimus sold his boots to Isaac Gross, in Lower Serle's-place, after trying hard to get another day's wear out of them. It had been a fierce battle, and he had found the arguments adduced by his leather friends too strong to be resisted. He parted from them with regret, although they had never been to him the friends he tried to believe. To begin with, they had always pinched him terribly, raising blisters upon his heels, painfully chafing his toes, bringing a tender place upon one foot, and fostering a corn upon the other; but now they had been parted with in exchange, with so much current coin added, for a pair of Isaac Gross's translations.

It might reasonably be supposed that old Matt had introduced Septimus as a customer; but no, this would have been introducing him to the abode of which he was ashamed; and Septimus had long since discovered the spot for himself, and come to the conclusion that it was a place where he could well suit himself, or rather the requirements of his pocket.

Isaac was smoking away as usual, and giving the finishing touch to a boot-sole by means of a piece of broken glass, whose keen edge took off minute shavings of the leather. Mrs. Slagg was busily carrying on trading transactions with a dirty man, and giving the best price for a barrowful of old newspapers; but both Isaac and Mrs. Slagg seemed out of spirits, and when a customer presented himself in the shape of Septimus Hardon, the translator put down his work slowly, sighed, laid his pipe upon a shelf, and seemed to carry out his bargain with more than his usual heaviness. As a rule, Isaac was a man given to smiling—smiling very slowly, and bringing his visage back to its normal state, a solid aspect: but there was no smile visible now; and when his visitor, for “three-and-nine and the old uns,” became the lucky possessor of a pair—no, not a pair—of two Oxonian shoes, Isaac took the money with another sigh, put it in an old blacking-bottle upon the shelf, which he used as a till, dropped the old boots upon a heap close by, took up his pipe, smoked, sighed, and then scraped away at his boot-sole without taking a single peep at his neighbour.

For Isaac Gross was sore at heart concerning the state of his old friend Matt, as sore at heart as was his customer; and when, slightly limping and pinched, Septimus creaked away in his new shoes, Mrs. Slagg having finished her paper purchases, and retaken her seat inside her door—a seat she seldom quitted, making her customers perform the weighing and lifting when practicable—she peeped round the door-jamb twice in vain; and though trade was prosperous as her love, in spite of its being enshrined so softly in fat, Mrs. Keziah Slagg’s heart was also sore, and she too sighed.

The feeling that every one was watching him was stronger than ever upon Septimus Hardon that morning, as he made his way along the big streets and alleys on his way towards one of the hospitals, and, after letting the matter sleep as it were for some time, he had now awakened to the fact that he should like to prosecute his claim; though he told himself frequently that he was too weak and wanting in decision to go on without help—the help he could not now obtain. He knew that Mr. Sterne would willingly assist him, but this was not the required help; and he shrank from making him his confidant, while he eagerly sought the aid of the old printer now it was not forthcoming.

There are some strange contradictions in the human heart; and at the present time, had old Matt presented himself to go on with the search in the unbusiness-like way already followed, the chances are that Septimus Hardon would have shrunk from it, or allowed himself unwillingly to be dragged into further proceedings.

But old Matt was not present; and now, with the

idea troubling him that much time had been wasted and the matter must be at once seen to, Septimus Hardon made his way towards the hospital; not that he was ill in body, though troubled greatly in mind concerning the man who had been his friend in the hardest struggle of his life. For there were strong passions in the vacillating soul of Septimus Hardon, and he had been greatly moved when, after another long absence, during which he had anxiously waited for the old man, a letter had been delivered, telling how that Matthew Space lay seriously ill in a hospital ward.

For the first few days after their parting, Matt’s last words had strangely haunted Septimus, and he could not rest for thinking of them; but they grew fainter with the lapse of time. Matt came not to spur him once more to his task, and he sank lower and lower; while Doctor Hardon of Somesham, portly and smiling, grew great in the estimation of the people of the little town.

Septimus had tried more than once, in his unbusiness-like, haphazard way, to find out the residence of old Matt, at such times as the thoughts of his last words were strong upon him.

“He said he was ill, and then talked of medicine and attendance. He was wandering,” said Septimus. “I remember I had great difficulty in getting him along. Perhaps he is dead. Well, well; so with all of us. Let it rest, for I’ll take no further steps.”

A rash promise to make, as he felt himself when one day came the few lines, written in a strange hand, asking his attendance at the hospital. Only a few lines in a crabbed hand, without a reference to the search; but now the desire had risen strong in him once more, though he called himself selfish to think of his own affairs at such a time.

Septimus was not long in responding to the note, but he found the old man delirious. The second time, Lucy begged to go and see her old friend, and wept bitterly over his shrivelled hand; but the old man was incoherent, and knew them not.

And now for the third visit Septimus made his way to the hospital, where he found the old man apparently sinking from the effects of some operation.

The doctor had just left, when one of the nurses, a great, gaunt, bony woman, with a catlike smile, and a fine high colour in her cheeks, ushered the visitor to the bedside—a bed, one of many in the light, clean, airy ward.

Septimus Hardon was shocked at the change which had taken place in the old man, as he lay with his hands spread out upon the white coverlet of the bed, pale and glassy-eyed, and rather disposed to wander in his speech; but his face seemed to light up when he heard his visitor’s voice.

“No; no better,” he whispered. “Let’s see, I told you, didn’t I? Mrs. Hardon, medicine and attendance, wasn’t it? To be sure it was. Yes, medicine and shocking bad attendance here. That’s it; and I can’t tell you any more. I’m falling out of the forme, sir, unless some of these doctors precious soon tighten up the quoins.”

“No, no,” said Septimus, cheerily, “not so bad as that; a good heart is half the battle.”

"Yes, yes, yes, so it is," whispered the old man, feebly; "but, I say, is she gone?"

Septimus told him the nurse had left the room, and the old man continued—

"You can't keep a good heart here, sir, nohow. I wouldn't have come if I'd known all I know now. You saw her, didn't you?"

"The nurse?" said Septimus.

"Yes, her," replied the old man, shuddering; "she's a wretch, with no more feeling in her than a post. She'll do what the porters shrink from, sir. They have to carry the—you know what I mean, sir—down to the dead-house; and I've known her laugh at the young ones, and do it herself in a way that makes your blood run cold. Just wink, sir, if you see her coming. She'll be here directly with my wine or jelly—says I'm to have some on the little board, don't it?"

Septimus looked at the board above his head, and found that wine was ordered.

"Yes," said the old man, "the doctors are trumps, sir, every one of them; and no poor fellow out of the place could get the care and attention I've done here. My doctor couldn't do more if I paid him ten pound a day; and I always feel wonderful after he's gone; seems to understand my chronics, sir, as you wouldn't believe in. But those nurses, sir—don't tell 'em I said so, but they're devils, sir—devils. Medicine and attendance, sir; it's all the first and none of the last."

"Hush!" said his visitor, seeing, as he thought, that the old man was beginning to wander. "Mrs. Hardon would have liked to see you, and Lucy; but she could not leave her mother to-day."

"God bless her!" said the old man, fervently. "He asleep in the bed there told me she came the other day, looking like an angel of comfort in this dreary place, sir. God bless her! Tell her, sir, that the old man's true as steel, sir; the old blade's notched and rusty, but he's true as steel, sir. Do you hear? Tell her that old Matt's true as steel. But these nurses, sir," he whispered, holding by his visitor's coat, and drawing him nearer, "they're devils, sir—regular devils!"

"Not quite so bad as that," said Septimus, smiling.

"Not so bad, sir? Worse, sir; worse—ever so much worse. They'd do anything. There's no Sisters of Mercy here, sir, like they're talking of having at some places; they're sisters of something else—she-demons, sir, and one daren't complain or say a word. They'd kill a poor fellow as soon as look at him, and do, too—dozens."

"Nonsense," said Septimus, smiling; "don't be too hard, Matt."

"Taint nonsense, sir," whispered the old man, eagerly. "I aint wandering now, though I have been sending up some queer proofs—been touched in the head, you know, and thought I was going; but it didn't seem to matter much if I could only have been easy in my mind, for I wanted to be out of my misery. But I couldn't be comfortable, on account of the medicine and attendance, and your uncle. What business has he to get himself made head doctor here, sir, just because I came; and then to set the nurses against me to get me out of the

way? He knows I'm against him, and mean you to have your rights, and he's trying with medicine and attendance to—no, stop, that's not it," whispered the old man, "I've got wrong sorts in my case, and that's not what I wanted to say."

And then, for a few moments, it was pitiable to witness the struggle going on against the wandering thoughts that oppressed him; but he seemed to get the better of his weakness, and went on again.

"There, that's better, sir; your coming has seemed to do me good, and brightened me up. I get like that sometimes, and it seems that I've no power over my tongue, and it says just what it likes. Tell Miss Lucy I'm getting better, and that I want to get out of this place. I know what I'm saying now, sir, though I can't make it quite right about that medicine and attendance that we wanted to know about; for it bothers me, and makes my head hot, and gets mixed up with the medicine and attendance here. But I shall have it right one of these days. I did nearly, once, but it got away again."

In his anxiety now to know more, Septimus drew out paper and pencil.

"Don't think about it now," he said; "but keep these under your pillow, and put it down the next time you think anything."

Old Matt smiled feebly, and drew forth his old memorandum-book, and, slowly opening it, showed the worn stumpy piece of pencil inside.

"I'd thought of that, sir, and should have done so before, only I was afraid that I might put down the wrong thing—something about the nurses, you know, when they would have read it, and then, perhaps, I shouldn't have had a chance to say any more. And 'tisn't really, sir, it isn't nonsense about them. You think I'm wandering, and don't believe it; and it's just the same with the doctors—they don't believe it neither. There was one poor chap on the other side of the ward, down at the bottom there—he told the doctor his nurse neglected him, and drank his wine, putting in water instead, beside not giving him his medicine regular; so the old doctor called for the nurse, and—"

"But you must not talk any more," said Septimus, kindly, "you are getting exhausted."

"I aint," said the old man, angrily; "it does me good—revives me; and you don't believe me, that's what it is."

"Yes, I do, indeed," cried Septimus.

"Then let me finish," whispered the old man. "Doctor Hardon called and asked her where she saw the entry. There, now—there," whimpered Matt, "see what you've done—you made me upset a stickful of matter, and got me all in a pye again. No; all right, sir, I see, I see—he asked her about it before the patient, very sharply, for the doctors mean well, sir. And, then, what did the old crocodile do, sir, but just turn her eyes towards the whitewash, smooth her apron, raise her hands a bit, and then, half smiling, looks at the doctor like so much pickled innocence, but never says a word; while he, just to comfort the poor fellow, told him to keep up, and it should all be seen to; and then there was a bit of whispering between the doctor and the nurse, and then he went off. But I could see who was believed,

for I heard the doctor mutter something about sick man's fancies as he came across to me. That poor chap died, sir!"

Just then, Septimus gave the old man a meaning look, for one of the nurses came up with a glass of wine, and smiled and curtsied to the visitor.

"I hope he aint been talking, sir?" said the woman, in a harsh, grating voice, with the corners a little rubbed down; "getting on charming, aint he sir? only he will talk too much. Now, drink your wine up, there's a good soul. Don't sip it, but toss it down, and it will do you twiced as much good."

And while the old man, with the assistance of his visitor, raised himself a little, she gave his pillow two or three vengeful punches and shakes as she snatched it off the bed, the result of her efforts being visible in a slit across the middle, which she placed undermost.

"Yes," muttered Matt, when the woman had gone.

"Yes; toss it down so as not to taste it. Why, that was half water—beautiful wines and spirits as they have here, sir. That's the very one herself, sir. She killed him."

"Killed who?" exclaimed Septimus, horrified.

"Don't shout, sir—leastwise, not if you want to see me again," said Matt, grimly. "Killed that poor fellow I was telling you about. She never forgave him; and a week afterwards and there was the screen round his bed, and the porters came and carried him away. She killed him, sure enough, and I aint a-going to tell you about the bother there was with his friends about the doctors, and what they did to him afterwards—it might upset you. It almost does me; not that I care much, for it don't matter when you're gone, and I've got no friends."

"Hush, pray; it can't be so!" exclaimed Septimus, shuddering.

"No, of course not," chuckled the old man, brightening up from the effects of his stimulant. "Oh, no; sick man's fancies, sir, aint they? Just what every one would say; but she killed him all the same, just as dozens more have been killed here. It don't take much to kill a poor fellow hanging in the balance—him in one scale, and his complaint in the other. The doctor comes and gets in the same scale with him, and bears him down a bit right way; but then, as soon as the doctor's gone, the nurse goes and sits in the other scale, and sends him wrong way again. Good nursing's of more consequence sometimes than the doctoring, I can tell you, sir; and if I'd had good nursing I shouldn't have been here at all. Ikey means well, you know, sir; and so does Mother Slagg, eh? but you don't know them, sir, and it don't matter."

"But had you not better be silent now?" hinted Septimus.

"No," said the old man, testily; "being so quiet, and having no one to talk to, has half-killed me as it is. I don't want to be killed—I want to get out, sir. And, mind you, I don't say about that poor fellow that she poisoned him, or choked him, or played at she-Othello with the pillow, sir; but there's plenty of other ways of doing it. The doctor knows the man's condition, and his danger, and orders him such and such things to keep him going, and bring him round, eh?"

Septimus nodded, for the old man paused for breath; though the wine he had taken made him talk in a voluble and excited manner, but still with perfect coherence.

"Well, sir; and who's got to carry out the doctor's orders? Why, the nurse, to be sure. Just push the pillow a little more under my head, sir; she's made it uncomfortable. That's it; thank you, sir. Well, you nor no one else won't believe that a nurse here would do anything wrong. But now, look here: suppose you see that a lamp wants trimming, what do you do? You give orders for it to be trimmed, sir, don't you?"

Septimus nodded again.

"Well, then," whispered the old man, hooking one of his long fingers in a button-hole of his visitor's coat; "suppose they don't trim the lamp; suppose it isn't trimmed, eh? what then?"

"It goes out," said Septimus.

"To be sure—exactly, sir; and there have been lots of lamps go out here. They won't trim them, or forget to trim them, and tell themselves they're only sparing the poor creatures misery, while no one dares to speak about it. Talk of death, sir; they think no more of it here, sir, than one does of snuffing out a candle. You see, decent women won't come to a place like this to do the work these nurses do. It's only to be done for money or love. Now it's done for money; and while it's done for money it can only be done by hard, heartless, drinking creatures, who've got women's shapes and devils' hearts, sir. But the doctors are all right, sir—only that they don't see all that we poor patients see. If skill and doctoring will put me right, sir, I shall be put right, sir. But I'm scared about it sometimes, and half afraid that some of those beauties will weight the wrong scale so heavily that the doctors won't pull me square. Sick man's fancies, sir, eh? Wanderings, aint they?"

Septimus Hardon knew not what to say, but whispered such comfort as he could.

"Something ought to be done, you know," said the old man, feebly; "but don't hint a word of what I've said, sir, to a soul—please don't," he said, pitifully. "You see that all these goings on prey upon a poor fellow's mind; and if he isn't low-spirited lying in a hospital ward, when is he likely to be? One wants sympathy and comfort, sir, and to feel that there's some one belonging to you who cares for you, and is ready to smooth your pillow, and to lay a cold hand upon your hot forehead, and say 'God bless you!' and I've no one—no one."

And the old man's voice grew weak and quavering.

"Come, come," whispered Septimus, "take heart, Matt; we'll come as often as they will let us. And you are getting better; see how you have chatted. You are only low now from the reaction. Try and rest a bit, and get rid of some of these fancies."

Old Matt's eyes turned angrily upon his visitor as he exclaimed—

"I tell you they are not fancies, sir, but truth. I wouldn't have come if I'd known; for I've seen men drink and women drink; but never any one like these she-wolves. Would you trust any one you loved to the care of a woman who drank, sir?"

"No!"

"They say they must have support, and I suppose they must; but it's hard, hard, hard!" groaned the old man.

And he shut his eyes, seeking out the hand of his visitor, and holding it tightly, until, by the rules of the place, he was obliged to leave.

Life without Meat.

IF it be possible for mankind to subsist entirely upon vegetarian fare, certainly the present is the best season of the year in which to try the experiment, when flesh meat is not always of the freshest kind, and when fruit and vegetables are at their prime.

The "Order of Danielites," a vegetarian society formed after the model of secret societies, with a pledge enjoining abstinence from fish, flesh, fowl, alcohol, and tobacco, was therefore wise in inviting the public to "a grand conversazione" at the present time, and in taking the opportunity of demonstrating the advantages of adopting a vegetarian course of diet.

The rendezvous was in Bloomsbury, in which the first branch of the order, "The Garden of Eden," meets periodically. Gardeners were present in their working clothes (wearing their regalia of a yellow and green sash), and spread upon a large billiard table were refreshments of various descriptions, of which, at intervals, the guests were invited to partake. A fresh-coloured and vigorous-looking young vegetarian was placed in the chair, and superintended the proceedings with much geniality, and the first speaker was a lady, who told the audience that she had been a vegetarian for the space of twelve months, and that she had reaped so much benefit from it that she strongly recommended it to others. For a long time she had suffered greatly from indigestion, and had tried everything in the way of tonics, but nothing had cured her except vegetarianism. Instead of always feeling a sinking, and requiring refreshments and stimulants five or six times a day, she was now content with two meals a day, though she admitted she generally had three. If vegetarianism were adopted by the ladies there would, she said, be fewer drunken husbands, the housekeeping expenses would be less, and there would be no kitchen drudges. If mothers would live on what she termed a "natural diet," their children would be more healthy, more energetic, more moral, and their own sufferings would be less.

After a recitation, there was a short interval for general conversation, in the course of which refreshments were dispensed, some vegetarian sandwiches creating much curiosity as to what were the ingredients used, the flavour being somewhat akin to that of the "faggot." A dish of haricot beans was also served, and numerous were the inquiries for the recipe; but curiosity was to be restrained till later in the evening, when it was promised the recipes should be given.

Then another member of the Garden told how he had been an invalid, and asserted that vegetarianism had cured him. He also partakes of only two meals a day, requiring nothing from 1.30 p.m., when he dined, till the next morning at breakfast.

The economical argument, he considered, would carry vegetarianism farther than any other argument, and he asserted that 3d. spent on vegetarian diet would go as far as 1s. spent on meat. England ought to be able to furnish the whole of her population with food, without reference to imports from other countries, as the increasing population of Australia would soon require all the corn that that colony raised, and Russia might not always feel inclined to supply England with corn.

Some further entertainment was then provided, in the shape of songs, readings, &c., and then the host gratified the curiosity of his guests by describing the mode of making vegetarian sandwiches. Between two thin slices of brown bread was laid what was generally known as force-meat, which is made of the following ingredients:—14 ounces of bread-crumbs, 2 ounces of ground rice, 1 ounce of semolina, 2 ounces of parsley, 2 ounces of onion, 10 drops of essence of lemon, two-thirds of an ounce of salt, or more, to taste, 5 grains of pepper, 1 teaspoonful of oil, 40 ounces of water, 20 grains of lemon thyme, one-third of an ounce of sugar. The water should be first brought to a boil, then the teaspoonful of oil should be poured in, the pepper and salt added, and then the bread-crumbs and other ingredients stirred in. The preparation of the haricot beans was more simple. A quart of haricot beans, which could be bought at any cornchandler's for 6d., and a Spanish onion, costing 1d., were the whole contents of the dish, with the exception of three and a half quarts of water and salt to taste. The beans might be soaked overnight, and if so required less boiling; if not soaked they required about four hours' boiling. A teaspoonful of oil poured in caused the water to boil at a higher temperature, and thus softened the outer coat of the bean, which otherwise was sometimes rather hard. The beans of which they had partaken had been left to cool for four hours, as it was very important that food should not be eaten too warm. Some people, he said, seemed to him as though they had got throats made of cast-steel by the way in which they swallowed things into which they would hardly dare put their finger; and it must be remembered that the skin of the throat was much more delicate than that of the finger. He believed that it was in a great measure owing to the consumption of hot foods and liquids that the teeth were so liable to decay. His own diet cost him from 6d. to 8d. per day, and upon this he asserted he did not live sparingly but obtained plenty of nourishment. In advocating the claims of the Danielite Order, he pointed out that it only asked people to sign the pledge for a week, as at any time they could resign upon a week's notice.

Another recess was then declared for refreshment and conversation, during which those present were requested to send up any questions for answer by the chairman. This was freely done, and amongst the questions dealt with was one, "Are there any fat vegetarians, as there are none present?" The chairman deprecated the idea that a large amount of fat was necessary to health, but gave several instances of well-known vegetarians who were blessed (or otherwise) with an undue degree of corpulence. Another questioner desired to know if some means

could not be devised of introducing vegetarian cookery into the schools of cookery that are being established in various parts of the country. The chairman said he thought the question was one which the Danielites might well discuss when in session, with a view to taking some action thereupon; and a visitor added that recently, at the Exeter School of Cookery, an evening was specially devoted to that purpose. Some one, evidently fond of statistics, was anxious to know the proportion of vegetarians to non-vegetarians present, and what was the average duration of their practice. This, of course, could not be answered on the spur of the moment, but, by inquiry amongst the company, it was ascertained that the oldest vegetarian had been so for twenty-five years, the youngest six weeks, and that the average practice had been over three years each; the proportion of vegetarians to non-vegetarians present being two-thirds.

Adventure with a Python.

IN a paragraph lately we gave an account of an adventure with a serpent at Singapore. Further particulars have been sent from Singapore to the *Field*, from which we make the following extract:—

"Last Friday I went to the Botanical Gardens to see my friend Mr. M., the superintendent. He was, however, absent; and I went round the gardens with the head gardener, Mr. S., who has also the zoological department to look after. He wanted me to see some animals which he said he had tamed lately, amongst others a large python (or rock snake), which is placed in one of the cages in the aviary. I did all I could to prevent him from entering the cage; but what I said was of no avail. At 5.30 p.m. he called for the keys, and even invited me to go in with him. I, however, thought it far safer to remain outside.

"Mr. S., accompanied by one Malay attendant only (to whom instructions had been given to remain outside in the alley), then opened the door of the cage in which the enormous brute was lying, and peeped in. It was coiled up in a corner, but as soon as the door was slid showed signs of life. Mr. S. began what he called 'charming the snake.' This consisted in working his hands backwards and forwards, right and left, and also in a good deal of swearing when the animal lifted head and showed signs of ill-temper. Mr. S. remained all the time in the alley, not venturing to enter the cage completely. He at last took his hat in his left hand and pushed it at the snake, which at once made a snap for it. This he kept on doing for some three or four minutes, till eventually the brute began uncoiling itself slowly, and lay out on the flooring in a figure of eight. I was the only spectator up to this time, when a soldier (to whose courage and timely assistance Mr. S. afterwards owed his life) came up to the aviary, and I asked him to help me to persuade Mr. S. to stop this dangerous game. He would, however, take no notice of our warning, and in another moment the python gave one terrible snap at the hat, and instead of letting go as before, held on like a bulldog. Mr. S. then seized the animal's neck with his right hand,

and a fight began. I saw this was no longer part of the programme, especially as in a second the beast had its tail round Mr. S.'s neck and head, and managed to get a coil of its muscular body round his chest. Mr. S. called out for 'More men! more men!' and that was all he was capable of saying. I managed to call a few native attendants together, and got a chopper, which the soldier tried to use, but without any effect on the terrible monster.

"I then went off to the barracks for help. When I returned to the aviary, accompanied by some dozen officers and men of the 28th Regiment, we found that Mr. S. had been rescued from the folds of his 'hugging' adversary by the soldier, who, from his own account, says that he managed somehow or other to get the end of the tail off Mr. S.'s head, and, by pulling and getting what aid he could from the natives, released him so far. Then they all began stretching the python as much as was in their power; and finding it probably hard work to fight against so many, the beast slackened its hold of Mr. S.'s breast, and he was pulled out by the legs into the alley, and the door slid back.

"Need I say, Mr. S. was quite insensible. I sent for a doctor, then took him home on a stretcher, and Mr. M. and myself stayed up with him till one a.m. He never recovered his senses up to 7.30 next morning. The bruises across his breast were very severe, but it was found that no bones had been broken.

"This rock snake is a female, length when last measured 23 feet, said to be 18 inches in girth. It is the property of the museum, and is kept in the Zoo until in a perfect state for preservation.

"This formidable animal had Mr. S. in its coils for about ten minutes.

"I think it only right to mention that the man who so heroically went to Mr. S.'s assistance is Mr. J. Adolphus, private in H.M.'s 28th Regiment (North Glous.), and is a native of Sweden and a countryman of Mr. S., who, it may be said, denies having been near the snake. The whole thing to him is a blank in his existence; he cannot account for the way in which he spent his time of Friday evening and night, and says it is a got-up story."

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER VII.



IT was often quite late that Dutch sat in the office, long after Rasp had grumbly gone off, with a final stoke at the fire, which afterwards sank and died out; and at such times, in the semi-darkness, with the goggle-eyed helmets seeming to stare at him and rejoice in his sufferings, he asked himself what he should do? Whether he should leave home for ever? Whether he should put her away from him, and wait till some time in the far-off distance of life when she might, perhaps, come to him, and ask his pardon for the wrong she had done.

"No!" he would exclaim, "I will not believe such evil of her.

She is dazzled by this polished scoundrel, and poor, rough I compare badly with him; for she cannot see our hearts."

Should he end the matter at once?

No, he felt that he could not, for he had nothing but his bare, cruel suspicions to go upon, the greatest of which was that before long Hester would flee with this man, and his home would be wretched.

Wretched? If not wretched already, for all was wretched at home. Hester was low-spirited; for his own part, he rarely spoke; and the Cuban avoided him.

So far, Dutch had indulged in the hope that he might, after all, be deceiving himself, when one evening, on entering the little drawing-room suddenly, Hester started up, looking confused, and left the room, while the Cuban turned away with a short nod, and walked to the window.

From that hour every spare moment was devoted to watching; for the suspicion grew stronger now that before long, if he did not stay it, his home would be left desolate.

This lasted for some days, when the idea was checked by Lauré himself, who, as the time approached for the departure of the expedition, suddenly began to display great interest in the proceedings, so that Dutch felt compelled to own that his ideas of flight must be wrong; in fact, it was as if Lauré had divined his thoughts just as he was about

to speak to Mr. Parkley, and tell him his suspicions that the Cuban evidently meant to give up the expedition, and, much as it would tear his heart to speak, give the reasons for his belief.

Hardly, though, had he come to the conclusion that he was wrong, when a trifle set him off back in his former way of thinking, for his mind was now a chaos of bewildering fancies, and the slightest thing set his jealous feelings in a blaze.

He would not speak to Hester; he would not take an open, manly way of seeing whether his suspicions were just; but, submitting his better parts to his distorted reason, he nursed his anguish, and so it fell out that one night he found himself watching his own house, in the full belief that his wife's illness in the morning before he left for the office was a subterfuge, and that the time had come for her to take some step fatal to her future.

"But I will stop it," muttered Dutch to himself, as, with throbbing pulse and beating temples, he avoided the gate, so as not to have his footsteps heard on the gravel, and, climbing the fence, entered his own garden like a thief.

He had hardly reached the little lawn when he heard the sound of wheels, and, stepping behind a clump of laurels, he stopped, listening with beating heart, for here was food for his suspicions.

As he expected, the fly stopped at the gate; a man in a cloak got out, went hastily up the path, knocked softly at the door, and was admitted on the instant.

Dutch paused, hesitating as to what he should do. Should he follow and enter? No, he decided that he would stay there, and stop them as they came out, for the fly was waiting.

"Where would Hester be now?" he asked himself, with the dimly-seen house seeming to swim before him; and the answer came, as if hissed into his ear by some mocking fiend—

"In her bed-room, getting something for her flight."

Half a dozen steps over the soft grass took him where he could see the window, and, of course, there was a light there; and then—

The blood seemed to rush to his brain, a horrible sense of choking came upon him, and he groaned as he staggered back, for there plainly enough seen was the figure of Hester, her hair hanging loose as she lay back over the arm of a man who was half leading, half carrying her towards the door.

All this in shadow was sharply cast upon the blind, and, with a groan of mingled rage and misery, Dutch rushed towards the house, but only to totter and fall heavily; for it was as though a sharp blow had been dealt him, and for some time he lay there, passive and ignorant of what passed around.

He recovered at length, and lay trying to think—to call to mind what this meant. Why was he lying there on the wet grass, with this strange deathly feeling of sickness upon him?

Then all came back with a rush, and he rose to his feet, to see that the light was still in the bed-room, but the shadows were gone.

With a cry of horror he ran to the gate, but the carriage was not there, and he stood listening.

Yes; there was the sound of wheels dying away. No, they had stopped, and he was about to rush off

in pursuit, when a hasty step coming in his direction stayed him, for he knew it well, and, drawing back, he let the Cuban pass him, then followed him softly as he stole round the house, going on tiptoe to the dining-room window, where Dutch caught him by the shoulder.

"Ah," he said, laughing, "so our gallant Englishman is on the watch, is he? Does the jealous trembler think I would steal his wife?"

"Dog!" hissed Dutch, catching him by the throat, "what are you doing here?"

"What is that to you, fool!" exclaimed the Cuban, flashing into rage. "Loose me, you madman, or you shall repent it! Curse you, you are strong!"

Blind to everything but his maddening passion, kept back now for so many days, and absorbed by the feeling that he could now wreak his vengeance upon the man who had wrecked his home, Dutch savagely tightened his hold upon his adversary, who, though a strong man, bent like a reed before him. It was no time for reason to suggest that he might be wrong: the idea had possession of the young man's soul that he was stopping an intended flight, and he drove the Cuban backwards, and had nearly forced him back across a garden seat, when Lauré, writhing like an eel, got partly free.

"Curse your English brute strength!" he muttered. And, getting his arm from his cloak, he struck Dutch full on the temple with some weapon, and the young man fell prone on the grass.

CHAPTER VIII.—BREAKING THE CONTRACT.

FIVE days had passed since the encounter in the garden, and Dutch Pugh had not been back to his home. He had lain for some time stunned from the blow he had received, and then risen half dazed, and, in a wretched, dejected way, made for the town, where, letting himself into the office, he had thrown himself upon the floor, and slept heavily till morning, to the great surprise of the clerks, who found him there when they came.

With an intense desire to hide his anguish from every one, he had given out that he had fallen asleep after being many hours at work, and no notice was taken of his soiled clothes. Then, with the truth gradually oozing out that no flight had been intended, but that for some reason, so Mr. Parkley said, Señor Lauré had gone back to his hotel, Dutch worked on superintending till the vessel was ready for sea.

The stores and machinery were complete for the purpose, and the passengers were on board. Moreover, a brother of Mr. Parkley had been invited to assist in the business during the chief partner's absence; and together Mr. Parkley and Dutch walked down to the dock.

"We had a sort of hint from Bessy Studwick that you haven't been home for some days, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley.

"Don't talk about it, please."

"Well, I won't much," said Mr. Parkley, "for I guess a great deal. It was all my fault, Dutch, my dear boy. I had no business to have proposed such a thing; and believe me, if I had known what a scoundrel the fellow was, I would never have entered into this project with him."

"Pray, say no more," exclaimed Dutch.

"I must, my dear boy—I must; for I want to clear myself. You see, the preparation for this trip means five thousand pounds, and I cannot throw the matter over; the loss is too heavy, or else I would."

"Ah, no, it is impossible," exclaimed Dutch.

"If I had known my man sooner, I would have seen him at Hanover before I would have had any thing to do with him. But, look here, my dear Pugh, I couldn't help hearing a great deal about your domestic trouble. Haven't you been wronging the little woman?"

"If you have any respect or feeling for me, Mr. Parkley, say no more."

"All right, my dear fellow," said the other, with a sigh, "I will not; only act like a sensible man in all things, home and business. Heigho! I really wish I was not going; but the idea of these hidden treasures sets me on fire."

Mr. Parkley forgot all his hesitation as they stepped on board and saw how—in spite of the bustle and confusion consequent upon receiving late supplies of fresh meat and vegetables—ship-shape and excellent were Captain Studwick's arrangements. John Studwick was on board, seated upon a wicker chair, and his sister beside him; Mr. Meldon, the young doctor, was leaning over the bulwarks, with a very tall, thin young man, the naturalist friend; the sailors were busy lowering bales and arranging coops and hens; and all was ready for the start—in fact, the dockmen were ready to warp the schooner out, and, after a short run behind a tug down the harbour, they would have the open channel before them.

There was a goodly concourse of people about the wharves, for the object of the schooner's trip had somehow gained wind; and while some expressed interest and curiosity in the voyage, others laughingly called it a fool's errand.

"Has anybody seen Señor Lorry?" said Mr. Parkley, at last.

"I had a note from him," said Captain Studwick. "He said he would be down here punctually at twelve. Has his luggage come, Oakum?"

"None on it, sir," said the rough old sailor, pulling his forelock.

"That's strange," said the captain. "When did you see him, Parkley?"

"Last night; and he said he would be aboard in the morning, and glad of it, for he was sick of England."

"Twelve o'clock now," said the captain. "Well, the tide serves; I must give the word for getting out of dock. He must have a longer row for being late. He's sure to come, of course."

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Parkley; but he glanced uneasily at Dutch, as if he did not feel sure.

"Ready, there!" cried the captain. "Now my lads, be handy there, cast off those ropes for'ard. Oh, here he is! Hold hard, there!"

"But where's his luggage?" said Mr. Parkley.

"Oh, behind the crowd," said the captain. "Come along, sir, we were going without you."

"Indeed!" said the Cuban, with a smile. "I doubt that. Where would you go?"

"Where Mr. Parkley told me," said the captain.

"Give me the order, I'll find the place. Let's see, Mr. Pugh, we are to send you back in the tug, I suppose?"

Dutch nodded.

"Now, then, forward there," cried the captain; "be ready to cast off. Are you ready?"

"Ay, ay," came in chorus from the smart, well-picked crew.

"Stop!" exclaimed Lauré, in a loud voice; and, turning to Mr. Parkley, he pointed to Dutch and said, "That is your partner, is it not, Mr. Parkley?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And he will share in the profits of this expedition?"

"Certainly, he will, sir."

"Then, sir, I break our engagement. I shall have nothing to do with the voyage. The matter is entirely off."

"Damn it all, sir!" cried Mr. Parkley, in a passion. "You can't do that."

"But, sir, I have done it," said the Cuban, lighting a cigar.

"What! After I've spent all this money in preparation?"

"I have told you," said the Cuban, contemptuously.

And he gave a malignant glance at Dutch.

"Mr. Parkley," said Dutch, stepping forward, "my private quarrel with this man shall not stand in your way. All this preparation has been made for the expedition, and my being your partner shall not stop it. Sir, our partnership is at an end."

"Is it?" said Mr. Parkley, with his teeth set. "No, I'll be hanged if it is!" And as the men gathered round, wondering at what they had heard, he laid his hand on Dutch Pugh's shoulder. "I've proved you, my lad; but I've not proved this man, who at the first touch bends and nearly breaks. We are partners, and mean to stay so; and Mr. Lorry here will have to keep to his bond, or I'll soon see what the law says to him."

The Cuban smiled contemptuously.

"Suppose I say it was all a mad dream, and I know of no such place—what then?"

"Why, you are a bigger scoundrel than I took you for."

"Sir!" cried the Cuban, menacingly.

"Oh, you want to frighten me with your big looks, sir," cried Mr. Parkley. "Now, then, I ask you in plain English, will you fulfil your undertaking, and show me the place where the old Spanish galleons are sunk?"

"No," said the Cuban, coolly. "I will not help to enrich my enemy."

And he again looked indignantly at Dutch.

"Mr. Parkley," exclaimed the latter, "I cannot see all this costly enterprise ruined because of my private trouble with this villain."

"Villain!" cried Lauré, confronting Dutch, whose face flushed, and whose hands were half raised to seize his enemy.

"Be silent," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "I've that within me that I can hardly control. If you rouse it again, by the God who made me I'll strangle you, and hurl you over the side!"

The Cuban involuntarily shrank from the menacing face before him, and Dutch by a strong effort turned to Mr. Parkley.

"Make terms with him, sir. I will not stand in your way."

"Yes, I'll make terms with him," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, angrily. "Now, sir, I ask you again, will you fulfil your contract?"

The Cuban half-closed his eyes, puffed forth a ring of smoke, and said, quietly—

"In my country, when one man strikes another, the insult is washed out in blood. Your bold partner there has struck me, a weaker man than himself, and I cannot avenge the insult; for you cold islanders boast of your courage, but you will not equalize the weak and strong by placing the sword, the knife, or the pistol in their hands. You say no; that is the law. You call in your police. Fools! cowards! do you think that will satisfy me?"

"Did Mr. Pugh strike you, then?" said Mr. Parkley.

"Yes, three cruel blows," hissed the Cuban, with his face distorted with rage.

"Then you must have deserved it," cried Mr. Parkley.

"You think so," said the Cuban, growing unnaturally calm again. "Then I say I must have satisfaction somehow. Your partner makes me his enemy, and you must suffer. I shall not fulfil my contract. I will not take you where the galleons lie. You have made your preparations. Good. You must suffer for it, even as I suffer. I give up one of the dreams of my life. I will not go."

A pang shot through Dutch Pugh's breast; for in this refusal to depart he saw an excuse to remain in England, and once more the hot blood rose to his face.

"You absolutely refuse, then, to show Captain Studwick and me where the objects we seek are hid?" said Mr. Parkley, turning up his cuffs, as if he meant to fight.

And the Cuban's hand went into his breast.

"I absolutely refuse," cried the Cuban, disdainfully.

"You know, I suppose, that you forfeit half the result?" said Mr. Parkley.

"Yes," said the Cuban, moving towards the gangway, "I know I lose half the result."

"You know I have spent five thousand pounds in preparations?" said Mr. Parkley, calmly.

"Yes," sneered the Cuban, "and you have your law. Go to it for revenge: it may please you."

"No," said Mr. Parkley, looking round at the frowning faces of his friends. "That means spending another thousand to gain the day, and nothing to be obtained of a beggarly Cuban adventurer, who has neither money nor honour."

"Take care!" cried Lauré, flashing into rage, and baring his teeth like some wild cat. But the next instant, with wonderful self-command, he cooled down, standing erect, proud and handsome, with his great black beard halfway down his breast. "Bah!" he exclaimed, "the English diving master is angry, and stoops to utter coward's insults."

"I'll show you, Mr. Lorry, that I am no coward over this," said Mr. Parkley, firmly. "You mean

to throw us over, then, now that we are ready to start?"

"You threaten to throw me over," said the Cuban, smiling disdainfully. "If you mean do I still refuse to go, I say yes—yes—yes! You and your partner shall never touch a single bar of the treasure. Ha! ha! What will you do now?"

"Go without you," said Mr. Parkley, coolly. "Captain Studwick, see that this man goes ashore."

The Cuban was already close to the gangway, but he turned sharply round, and took a couple of steps towards the last speaker.

"What!" he said, with a look of apprehension flashing out of his eyes. "You will go yourself, without one to guide you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley; "and if you went down on your knees now to beg me to take you, damme, sir, you've broke your contract, and I wouldn't take you!"

"Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha!" laughed the Cuban, derisively, as he quickly recovered his composure. "A beggarly threat! Do you not know that it took me five years in constant toil to make the discovery; and you talk like this?"

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley. "It took a beggarly mongrel foreigner five years, no doubt; but it would not take an enterprising Englishman five weeks."

The Cuban's hand went into his breast again as he heard the words "beggarly mongrel foreigner," and Captain Studwick grasped a marlinspike, ready to strike his arm down if he drew a weapon; but the rage was crushed down directly, and Lauré laughed again derisively.

"Go then, fools, if you like! But I know it is an empty threat. Ha! ha! ha! Go alone. A pleasant voyage, Señor Parkley, and you, too, Señor Captain. You will perhaps find me there before you."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Parkley. "But go I will, and hang me if I come back till I have found it."

"Well, for the matter o' that, Master Parkley and Capen Studwick," said a rough voice, "if it means putting the schooner at anchor where them Spanish galleons was sunk in the Carib Sea, if you'll let me take the wheel, and you'll find fine weather, I'll steer you to the very spot."

CHAPTER IX.—POLLO'S EVIDENCE.

"WHAT?" shrieked the Cuban, rushing forward with outstretched hands, but only to control himself directly, and smile contemptuously.

"I says as I'll clap this here schooner right over two or three spots where old ships went down, and also off the coast where one on 'em lies buried in the sand, all but her ribs and a few planks," said the old sailor, Sam Oakum.

"He's a liar—a cheat. Bah!" exclaimed the Cuban, with contempt.

"I wouldn't advise you to say them sorter things, gov'nor," said Oakum, quietly. "I know'd a chap as rubbed the skin off the bridge of his nose wunst, and blacked both his eyes agin my fist, for saying less than that."

"Bah!" said the Cuban, snapping his fingers.

"And do you know, Oakum?" exclaimed Mr. Parkley, eagerly. "Can you prove it?"

"If anybody would pass a man a bit o' 'bacco,

I could, I dessay," said the old fellow, quietly. "Thanky, mate. Just pass the word for Pollo to come aft, will you? He's in the galley."

A sailor, who had given Oakum the tobacco, ran forward, while all waited in breathless attention—the Cuban standing like a statue, with folded arms, but, in spite of his apparent composure, smoking furiously, like a volcano preparing for an eruption.

The sailor came back directly.

"Says he's cooking the passengers' dinner, and can't leave it, sir," said the sailor.

"Tell the cook to come here directly. I want him," exclaimed the captain, sternly.

And the sailor ran off, returning with Pollo, the black cook, rubbing his shiny face.

"I speck, sah, if de rose meat burn himself all up, you no blame de cook, sah," he said.

"No, no, Pollo; only answer a question or two."

"Yes, sah; d'reckly, sah."

"Look ye here, Pollo, old mate," said Oakum; "you and I have had some rum voyages in our time, old nigger."

"You call me ole mate, sah," said Pollo, angrily, "I answer hundred tousan queshtum. You call me nigger, sah, I dam if I say noder word."

"It's all right, Pollo—I won't any more. You're a coloured gentleman; and, though I chaff you sometimes, I know that I can always depend on you, fair weather or foul."

The black nodded, showed his white teeth, and his eyes twinkled.

"Now, look here, Pollo, old man; do you remember being in the little brig off Caraccas, when we had the gold?"

"Yes, sah, I membah well; and membah when we had de tree hundred lilly women aboard de big ship, and de big horse alligator woman. Yah! yah! yah!"

"So do I, Pollo; but what did we do when we were in the brig?"

"Catch de fish," said Pollo.

"To be sure we did; but what did we find lying down fathoms deep in the clear water?"

"You mean de ole 'Panish gold ship, sah?"

"There!" said Sam Oakum, turning round with a grim smile upon his mahogany face, "aint that there corroborative evidence, sir?"

"We find two ole ship, sah, and one on de shore," said Pollo, volubly; "and I dibe down, sah."

"Did you find anything?" said Mr. Parkley, eagerly.

"No, sah, him too deep down; but I membah perfect well, sah, all about 'em. All 'Panish ship, sah."

"That will do, Pollo," said Mr. Parkley. "Now go and see to the dinner. By the way, Pollo, will you come into the cabin after dinner, and join Mr. Oakum in drinking a glass of wine to the success of our voyage?"

"I hab great pleasure, sah," said the black, with his eyes twinkling.

And as he went away bowing and smiling, Mr. Parkley turned to the Cuban.

"Now, Mr. Lorry, or Lauré, or whatever your name is, will you have the goodness to step ashore?"

This is my ship, and this expedition belongs to me and my partner. You have refused to carry out your contract before twenty witnesses, and now you see that I can do without you."

"But," said Lauré, "the man is mad. He cannot take you; but I will not carry my revenge so far. Make me a good concession, and I will consent to go."

"I thank you, Señor Lauré, for endorsing the statement of an old friend, Oakum, and the ship's cook; and since you are so kind, I will make you a concession."

"You consent?" said the Cuban, more eagerly than he intended.

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley. "You shall be allowed to walk off the ship, instead of being kicked off. Captain Studwick, see that man off this deck."

A look that was almost demoniacal overspread the Cuban's face, and, shaking his fist menacingly, he stepped on to the wharf and disappeared through the crowd.

"Now, then," said Mr. Parkley, triumphantly—"we are ready. Captain Studwick, westward ho! Hallo, what now? What is it, Rasp?" as that individual came panting up.

"Are you sure as you've got all your company aboard?" said Rasp.

"Yes, I think so. Eh, captain?"

"My crew is all right, certainly," said the captain. "I don't know anything about yours."

"To be sure, I did not think to look after them, after they had promised to be aboard in good time. Where are John Tolly and James Morrison?"

"What, them?" said Oakum. "Oh, they came aboard at nine this morning."

"Yes," said one of the sailors; "but they went ashore again about ten—I saw 'em go."

"There," said Rasp; "where would you have been without me? I see John Tolly go by the office half an hour ago, so drunk he could hardly walk, and Morrison as well, and—"

"Tut, tut, tut! we must have them," exclaimed Mr. Parkley. "The scoundrels! to deceive us like this. Pugh, come ashore; we must get the police to help us."

"Then we shall not sail to-day," said the captain, with a shrug. "Never mind, we shall have the more time for getting ship-shape."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Parkley, eagerly; "we shall soon be back."

The captain shook his head, for he knew better; and night had fallen, and no more had been seen of the two divers on whom so much depended.

As the day wore on, Mr. Parkley and Dutch returned to the ship two or three times, to report progress, if such it could be called, for nothing was heard of the two divers.

"Dutch Pugh," said Mr. Parkley, on one of these meetings, "I shall never forgive myself. Here am I, as I thought, such a business-like man, and what do I do but go and forget to look after the main-spring of my works. I fit all my wheels together, and then, when I want to wind up, there's no springs. What should we have done without divers?"

(To be continued.)

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XXXII.—MR. JARKER IS "A BIT ODD."

THERE had been no occasion for Mr. William Jarker to carry out the threat he had once made; for in all the long space of time during which Agnes Hardon's child was in Mrs. Jarker's care, the money was always paid, faithfully and regularly, once a week, but at how great a cost to its mother none but the Seer of all hearts could tell. And always, in spite of sickness and misery, pain, and the hard bondage of her life, Jarker's wife was tender and loving to the little one within her charge. Perhaps it was the memory of another pair of bright eyes that had once gazed up into her own, perhaps only the promptings of her woman's heart; but when, by stealth almost, Agnes Hardon came to kiss her child, she left tearfully but rejoicing, for there was proof always before her of the gentle usage in the fond way in which the little thing clung to its nurse. The preference may have wrung her heart, but it was but another sorrow to bear, and, bending beneath her weight of care, she came and went at such times as seemed best for avoiding Jarker, the curate, and Septimus Hardon.

It was in her power to have let Lucy know where old Matt lodged; but of late they had met but little, and then, in their hurried interviews, his name was not mentioned, for the sorrows of the present filled their hearts.

But now Agnes Hardon was in greater trouble, for something whispered her that this sickness of poor Mrs. Jarker was a sickness unto death, and her soul clave to the suffering, ill-used woman who had filled the place of mother to her child; while, at the same time, she trembled for the future of her little one after each visit—ever feeling the necessity, but ever dreading, to take it away, for truly there was a change coming; and time after time when she left the garret, it was with a shudder, for there seemed to be a shadow in the room.

It was almost impossible to ascend the creaking stairs to the garret tenanted by Mr. Jarker without hearing Mrs. Sims, who, through some spiritual weakness, had left the house in the square to return once more to the Rents—a court honoured by most of those unfortunates who, from unforeseen circumstances, fell from the heights of the square; while the latter was always looked up to, in its topmost or basement floors, for promotion by the more fortunate tenants of the Rents; and now an ascending visitor was almost certain to hear the melancholy, sniffing woman blowing her fire. Generally speaking, we see bellows hang by the mantelpiece, with a time-honoured, bees'-waxy polish glossing them, as though they were family relics whose services were seldom called into requisition; but *chez* Mrs. Sims, the bellows had rather a bad time of it, and were worked hardly enough to make them short-winded. They already wheezed so loudly that it was impossible to take Mrs. Sims' bellows for anybody else's bellows; and this was probably due to their having inhaled a sufficiency of ashy dust to make them asthmatic, while the nozzle was decayed and burned away, from constant resting upon the specially-cleared bottom-

bar; the left half of the broken tongs doing duty for the vanished poker, borrowed once to clear the grating in the court, and never returned, for the simple reason that it found its way to Mrs. Slagg's marine-store shop, where it stayed in consideration of the porter receiving the best price given, namely, twopence.

Your boots might creak, and, as was their wont, the stairs would crack and groan, but still there was the sound of the bellows to be heard as you ascended the staircase—puff, puff, puff; and the stooping woman's stays crackled and crumpled at every motion—for Mrs. Sims, from always requiring support, external as well as internal, sought the external in whalebone, though for the internal she preferred rum.

There was always "suthin' as wanted a bit of fire:" perhaps it was washing-day, which, from the small size of Bennett's-rents' wardrobes, happened irregularly, with Mrs. Sims three times a-week, when the big tin saucepan used for boiling divers articles of wearing apparel, in company with a packet of washing powder, would be placed upon the little damaged grate, upon which it would sit like Incubus, putting the poor weak fire quite out of heart, when it had to be coaxed accordingly. Sometimes the bellows were required to hurry the "kittle," a battered old copper vessel that never boiled if it could help it, and, when compelled by the said hurrying, only did so after passing through a regular course of defiant snorts, even going so far as to play the deceiver, and sputter over into the fire, pretending to be on the boil when many degrees off, and so spoiling Mrs. Sims' tea—never the strongest to be obtained. Sometimes, again, the bellows were required to get a decent fire to cook a bit of steak for the master's dinner, or even to "bile the taters." At all events, of all Mrs. Sims' weaknesses, the principal lay in her elbows, and she could generally find an excuse for a good blow, accompanied sometimes by a cry over the wind-exhalers, as she sniffed loudly at her task.

There is no doubt but that in her natural good-heartedness Mrs. Sims would have operated quite as cheerfully upon any neighbour's fire as she did now upon the handful of cinders in Mrs. Jarker's grate; for, in spite of her sniffs, her weakness for the internal and external support, and her whining voice, Mrs. Sims was one of those women who are a glory to their sex. Only a very humble private was she in the noble army, but one ever ready for the fight; fever, cholera, black death, or death of any shade, were all one to Mrs. Sims, who only seemed happy when she was in trouble. If it was a neighbour who could pay her, so much the better; if it was a neighbour who could not, it mattered little: send for Mrs. Sims, and Mrs. Sims came, ready to nurse, comfort, sit up, or do anything to aid the needy; and old Matt had been heard more than once to wish she had been a widow.

Poor Mrs. Jarker would have suffered badly but for this woman's kindness. Many a little neighbourly act had been done by Lucy; but Mrs. Jarker's need was sore, and, beyond minding the child for her occasionally, Lucy's powers of doing good were circumscribed. And now, one night, sat Mrs. Sims, sniffing, and forcing a glow from the few embers in

the Jarker grate, as she made the sick woman a little gruel.

Mr. William Jarker ascended the stairs, after having had "a drop" at the corner—that is to say, two pints of porter with a quarter of gin in each; and upon hearing the noise of the bellows he uttered what he would have denominated "a cuss," since he bore no love for Mrs. Sims, and her sniff annoyed him; but when, upon ascending higher, he found that the sound did not proceed, as he expected, from the second floor, but from his own room, he began to growl so audibly that the women heard him coming like a small storm, and trembled, since Mr. Jarker was a great stickler for the privacy of his own dwelling, which he seemed to look upon as a larger sort of cage in which to keep his wife.

But although forbidden to enter the room, Mrs. Sims glanced at the pallid sufferer lying in the bed, with the feeble light of a rush candle playing upon her features; and muttering to herself, "Not if he kills me," resolved not to abdicate; and then, after a few final triumphant puffs, dropping at the same time a tear upon the top of the bellows—a tear of weakness and sympathy—she laid down the wind-instrument upon which she had been playing, and thrust an iron spoon into the gruel upon the fire, stirring it round so energetically that a small portion was jerked out of the saucepan upon the glowing cinders, and hissed viciously, forming a fitting finale to Mr. Jarker's feline swearing.

But the gruel did not hiss and sputter as angrily, nor did the erst glowing cinders look so black, as did Mr. William Jarker when he found "the missus still abed," and Mrs. Sims in possession.

"I have said as I won't have it," growled Mr. Jarker; "and I says agen as I won't have it. So let people wait till I arsts 'em afore they takes liberties with my place. So now p'raps you'll make yourself scarce, Missus Sims."

And then the birdcatcher crossed over to, and began muttering something to, his wife.

But Mrs. Sims was nothing daunted. She was in the right, and she knew it; and though her hands trembled, and more of the gruel fell hissing into the fire, as the tears of weakness fell fast, she stood her ground firmly.

"When I've done my dooty by her, as other people, whom I won't bemean myself to name, oughter have done, Mister Jarker, I shall go, and not before," said Mrs. Sims. "It's not me as could sit downstairs and know as that pore creeter there was dying for want of a drop of grule, and me not come and make it, which didn't cost you a farden, so now then!"

Here Mrs. Sims bridled a great deal, and sniffed very loudly—a couple of tears falling into the fender "pit-pat."

"Don't jaw," said Bill, gruffly, making a kind of feint with his hand as he stooped down to light his short black pipe by thrusting the bowl between the bars.

Mrs. Sims flinched as if to avoid a blow, to the great delight of Mr. Jarker; but exasperated him directly after by sniffing loudly, over and over again, producing, by way of accompaniment to each sniff, a low and savage growl and an oath.

"Well, I'm sure," exclaimed Mrs. Sims, "how polite we're a-growing!" But catching sight of the smouldering fire in the ruffian's eye, she hastily poured out the gruel, repenting all the while, for the poor woman's sake, that she had spoken; but upon taking the hot preparation, with some toast, to the invalid, she found her kindness unavailing, for though Mrs. Jarker sat up for a minute and tried to take it, she sank back with a faint sigh, and, with an imploring look, she whispered her neighbour to please go.

"Not till I've seen you eat this, my pore dear soul," said Mrs. Sims boldly, though, poor woman, she was all in a tremble, and kept glancing over her shoulder at Jarker, who, with his back to the fire and his hands in his pockets, glowered and scowled at the scene before him. Mrs. Sims passed her arm round the thin, wasted form, and supported the invalid; but, after vainly trying to swallow a few spoonfuls, the poor woman again sank back upon her pillow, sighing wearily, while the sharp, pecking sound made by one of the caged birds against its perch sounded strangely like the falling of a few scraps of soil upon a coffin—"Ashes to ashes—dust to dust." And then, for some minutes, there was silence in the room, till Mrs. Jarker turned whisperingly to her friendly neighbour, to beg that she would go now, and not rouse Bill, who was a bit odd sometimes.

So, saucepan in hand, Mrs. Sims wished the invalid "Good night;" and then, trembling visibly, sidled towards the door, evidently fearing to turn her back to Mr. Jarker, who was still growling and muttering, as if a storm were brewing and ready to burst; but Mrs. Sims' agitation caused her first to drop her iron spoon from the saucepan, and then, as she stooped to recover it, to flinch once more, to the ruffian's great delight, as he made another pugilistic feat—a gymnastic feat that he had learnt through visiting some marsh or another when a fight was to come off between Fibbing Phil and Chancery Joe—a feat that consisted of a violent effort to throw away the right fist, and a quick attempt at catching it with the left hand. But Mrs. Sims managed to get herself safely outside the door, and lost no time in hurrying downstairs, breathing more freely with every step placed between her and the ruffian; but she shrieked loudly on reaching the first landing, and dropped both saucepan and spoon, for the door was savagely thrown open, and the bellows came clattering after her down the stairs; and all in consequence of Mr. Jarker being a bit odd.

"A bit odd!"—in one of those fits which had often prompted him to strike down his weak, suffering, patient wife with dastardly, cruel hand, and then to kick her with his heavy boots, or drag at her hair until her head was bleeding—oddness which made the tiny child in the room shrink from him; while before now it had been traced on the poor woman's features in blackened and swollen bruises. But shrieks, and the falling of heavy blows, were common sounds in Bennett's-rents, and people took but little notice of Mr. Jarker's odd fits.

Bill took no heed to the weary, strangling cough which shook his wife's feeble frame, but smoked on furiously till the fire went out. She would not get

up to put on more coals, and he wasn't agoing to muck his hands; for, as has been before hinted, Mr. Jarker had soft, whitish hands, which looked as though they had never done a day's work; and at last, when the place looked more cheerless and dull than usual, he prepared himself for rest.

"You're allus ill," growled the ruffian, who had had just drink enough to make him savage; "and it's my belief as you wants rousing up."

But there came no answer to his remark. The little one slept soundly upon the two chairs which formed its bed, and, with half-closed eyes, the woman lay, breathing very faintly, as her lips moved, forming words she had heard from Mr. Sterne.

Bill felt himself to be ill-used, and was very sulky, a feeling which made him kick his boots to the end of the room, where one knocked over a linner's cage, when, still growling, the owner had to go and pick it up, which he did at the expense of his dignity, and there and then shook the cage till the unoffending bird rustled and fluttered about, panting and terror-stricken, to be half-drowned by the water he poured into its little glass the next minute. For, what business had his wife to be ill and allus having persons and Mrs. Simses a-pottering about in his place? Hadn't he made a row about it when she came when the kid was born, and hadn't she allus come at uncomfortable times since? Didn't she come when it died, and weren't things uncomfortable now, and she a-making them worse? He wouldn't have it—that he wouldn't; and, growling and swearing in a low tone, Mr. Jarker divested himself of a part of his attire, and threw himself upon the bed.

The rushlight danced and flickered, and a few drops of rain pattered against the window, as the night-breeze sighed mournfully down the court; first one and then another bird scraped at its perch, roused as it had been by the noise and light, so that it sounded again and again like the earth upon the coffin-lid; some loose woodwork amongst the pigeon traps upon the roof swung in the wind, and beat against the tiles, and then all was very quiet and still in the wretched attic.

"Bill—Bill, dear," murmured a voice after a while—a strange, harsh-sounding voice, as if it came from a parched and fevered throat—"Bill!"

No answer—only the heavy breathing of the ruffian, and the pattering as of earth upon the coffin-lid.

"Bill—Bill, dear—water!" whispered the voice once more.

But there was no answer, only the restless pattering noise of the birds. Then again silence so still and profound that it seemed hardly to be London. But the silence was broken by a little liquid trilling laugh, the laugh of the child, as some bright-hued happy dream passed over its imagination; though there was silence again the next moment, to be broken once more by the strange husky voice, a voice that seemed new to the place, as in almost agonizing tones it whispered—

"Kiss me, Bill!"

But there was for response only the sound as of the earth pattering upon the coffin-lid more fitfully and hollow. While now, slowly and timidly, a thin

white arm was raised, and, seen there in the dim light, it was as though it was waved threateningly above the drunken ruffian's head; but no—there was no threat in the act—no calling down of judgment from on high; for the arm was passed lovingly, tenderly, round the coarse bull neck, and still there was no response to the appeal.

"Kiss me, Bill!" was once more whispered.

But a long, deep-drawn, stertorous breath told that William Jarker slept heavily, as the arm lay motionless, clasping his neck; and then came a sigh, as piteous and heart-rending as ever rose from suffering breast.

On sped the hours: the rushlight burned down into the socket, flickered once, and expired; the distant sounds of traffic floated by once or twice; the customary heavy tramp of the policeman was heard to pass along the court; and now and then the ruffian breathed more stertorously than usual, or ejaculated some unconnected words in his sleep. Then the child started and whimpered for a few minutes, but sank to sleep again; and still through the night came that restless, pattering noise, that hollow rattle as of dry earth—"ashes to ashes, dust to dust"—the sound as of dry earth falling upon a coffin lid.

The stars paled as they set; the morning came, and the red-eyed lamplighter hurried from post to post, extinguishing the sickly-looking gas-jets; the noises in the streets grew louder and louder, and many a weary client lodging near woke, to wonder whether his case would come on that day. The men in Bennett's-rents who had work slowly tramped to it, many who were without rose to seek it; while others, again, to use their own words, took it out in sleep, and amongst these was Mr. William Jarker.

"Mammy, mammy!" at length rang in pitiful tones upon the ruffian's ear; and as he woke to the sensations of a hot, aching, fevered head and furred tongue, he tried to clear his misty, spirit-clouded faculties.

"Mammy, mammy!" again cried the child, who had climbed upon the bed, and was shaking her foster-mother. "Mammy, mammy!" she cried more pitifully, and then burst into a loud wail at her inability to wake her.

"Yah-h-h-h!" roared Bill, without moving; when, at the dreaded sound, the little thing ceased its cry, and, cowering beside the sleeping woman, laid a sunny head upon her cheek, and passed two tiny, plump arms round her neck, in a soft, sweet embrace that has power in its innocent love to warm even the coldest, though futile here.

"Blame it, how cold!" growled Mr. Jarker, trying to raise the arm that had lain upon his neck the long night through. But it was stiff and heavy; and, shrinking hastily away, the frightened man sat up, gazed for an instant at the face beside him, and then leaping, with a howl of terror, from the bed, rushed half-clad from the room.

And why did he flee? Was it that there was still the sound as of falling earth rattling upon a coffin-lid? For what was there to fear in the pale face of that sleeping woman, with the earthly pains and sorrow-traces faded away, to leave the countenance calm, softened, and almost beautiful. For there had

Come back something of the old, old look of maidenhood and happier times, when she had looked with admiration upon the stalwart form of the ruffian she had wed, and believed in him, wedding him to become his willing slave. Hers had been a hard life: born in misery and suffering, growing under sorrow and poverty and vice; yet had she been a woman with a woman's heart. But now she slept, to wake, we hope, where justice is tempered by mercy, and the secrets and sorrows of every heart are known. But now she slept, and her sleep must have been peaceful—happy; for the lines of sorrow had passed away, and there was a smile upon her lip.

Nothing to fear. Guilt fled, but Innocence stayed, and the soft, silky curls of the child were mingled with the thin dark locks of the woman, as a tiny smooth round cheek rested upon the marble temple, and a little hand played in the cold breast that should never warm it more.

Nothing to fear; though the simple people who soon assembled in the room spoke in whispers, passing in and out on tiptoe, many with their aprons to their eyes; while poor Mrs. Sims, when she returned to her own room with the child, quieted it by means of a large slice of sugared bread and butter, and relieved her own mind by sitting down to have a good long, soft blow at the fire, what time the tears pattered down plentifully on the bellows.

Nothing to fear; for calm and still was the face of the sleeping woman, who with her latest breath had rendered the love she had sworn to her husband, and now in peace she rested. But still through the long day, through the long night, and when the hard, harsh shape of the coffin stood in the room, there came at intervals the sharp, hollow, rattling noise as of earth falling upon its lid, when the listeners' ears would strain to catch those awful accompanying words—"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.—SICK MAN'S FANCIES.

THERE was a strange battle in the breast of the Reverend Arthur Sterne about this time. Now he would feel satisfied in his own mind that he had obtained a victory over self; while directly after, an encounter with Lucy, or some little incident that occurred during one of his visits, would teach him his weakness. Pained, and yet pleased, he left Septimus Hardon's rooms on the day after Mrs. Jarker's death, for he had been gazing upon a picture that an artist would have been delighted to copy: Lucy Grey weeping over the sunny-haired child she had just fetched from Mrs. Sims' room. He was pained, for the scene had brought up the thoughts of its mother, and her strange intimacy with Lucy; though the gentle, loving interest shown for the helpless, worse than orphan child, made his heart swell and beat faster as he thought of the mine of wealth, the tenderness the fair girl could bestow were she all he could have wished.

But the pain and sorrow predominated as he left the house and slowly descended, for he encountered *ma mère* upon the staircase, and he felt the colour mount to his temples as he met her sardonic smile and thought of her words; and then he hurried away, feeling at times that he must leave the place and seek another home, for his present life was

wearying in the extreme. He would have done so before but for one powerful thought, one which he could feel would maintain its sway, so that he would be drawn back and his efforts rendered useless—efforts that he made to break the chain that fettered him. For her part, Lucy avoided him, meeting him but seldom, and then with flushed cheek and averted eye; while though in any other instance he would have declared instantly that flush to have been that of shame or modesty, yet here, tortured by doubt, he could not satisfy himself, for at such times as he tried to be content came the memory of the scene in the lane, and the words of the old French-woman.

Lucy had fetched the child from across the court, but it was only admitted by Mrs. Septimus under sufferance; for she was in one of her weak fits that day, and if it had not been that Septimus encouraged the act, the little thing would have remained in Mrs. Sims' charge.

"Keep her, at all events, until I come back," Septimus had said; and his evident desire to go out had somewhat shortened the curate's visit, for the desire was strong now upon Septimus to gain fresh information touching the legitimacy of his birth. The more now that obstacles sprung up, the more he felt disposed to assert his right; but he acknowledged to himself that it was but a passing fit, and that he would soon return to his old weakness and despondency. Still there was a warm feeling of friendship for Matt to prompt him to revisit the hospital at an early day, and, soon after the curate had left Bennett's-rents, Septimus was on his way to the sick bed of the old man.

He thought a great deal of old Matt's assertion that he had seen an entry somewhere; but the more he thought, the more it seemed that this was merely a hallucination produced by his illness, for he could not but recall how he had confused it with matters of the past and present.

The old man slept when Septimus reached his bedside, and some time elapsed before he unclosed his dim eyes, and then they gazed blankly into his visitor's before he recognized him, when a light seemed to spread across his features, and he smiled faintly.

"Come again? That's right. I wanted to ask you something, sir," he said.

"Indeed!" said Septimus, eagerly; for he felt that it had to do with the matter in which he was interested.

"Why," said the old man, hesitating, "it was about the nurses, and your father, and—do you think that they had anything to do with the rats?"

Shuddering, and with the cold sweat breaking out upon his face at the bare recollection, Septimus laid a hand upon the old man's breast, and gazed wonderingly at him.

"Hush," said Matt, in a whisper; "don't speak loud, sir. I've been trying to put it all into shape. I think they had; and it's that woman who drinks my wine that knows all about it. They're keeping you out of your rights, sir, and they're all in the plot. Stoop down, please, a little closer; I want to whisper," and he drew his visitor nearer to him, so that his lips nearly touched his ear. "Medi-

cine and attendance, sir, eh? That was it, wasn't it?"

Septimus felt his heart sink with disappointment, as he slowly nodded his head.

"I've found it out, sir," continued the old man; "found it out for you, after travelling all over London. They think I've been here all the time; but, bless you, I've been out every night, and had it over with the posts in the street. They don't know it, bless you; but I've been tracking that entry, and, after the doctor has dodged me all over London, I've followed him here. It's not Doctor Hardon, sir, and yet it is, you know; for they're somehow mixed up together, and I've not had time to put that quite right; but I'll do it yet. Interest for that shilling you once gave me, sir, just at the time I was that low that I'd nearly made up my mind to go off one of the bridges, and make a finish. But just see if either of the nurses is coming, sir, and tell me, for they're all in it, and they'll keep you and Miss Lucy out of your rights. Tell her I'm true as steel, sir, will you?"

"Yes, yes," said Septimus, anxiously, for the old man seemed to be growing excited.

"But about the doctor, sir, and the entry," he continued, "it's here, sir; it's the house-surgeon, and I saw him make a memorandum here by my bedside—'Medicine and attendance: Mrs. Hardon.' He put it down in his pocket-book, after sharpening his pencil upon a bright shining lancet; and he did not know that I was watching him. Take him by the throat, sir, as soon as you see him, and make him give it to you."

"Try and compose yourself, Matt," said Septimus, sadly.

For he now felt that the whole history of the entry was but the offspring of a diseased mind. For a while he had suffered himself to hope that by some strange interposition of chance, with the old man for instrument, the whole matter was likely to be cleared up; but now the air-built castles were broken down—swept away by the sick man's incoherent speeches, and, after seeing him turn upon his side and close his eyes, the visitor rose to leave.

But old Matt heard the movement of his chair, and unclosed his eyes directly.

"You'll come again, sir, won't you?" he said, speaking quite calmly. "That always seems to make me clearer—shutting my eyes and having five minutes' doze. I'm weak, sir—very weak now; but I'm getting right, and I'll turn that over in my mind about the entry against you come again, when I can talk better, and try to set it right. But stop; let me see," he exclaimed—"stop, I have it. I remember now, I did think all about it, and where it was I saw the entry; and for fear it should slip my mind again, I did as you told me, and as I always meant to do—put it down in my pocket-book under the pillow here."

And he drew forth the tattered memorandum-book and held it out to his visitor.

Septimus turned over the leaves with trembling hands, coming upon technical references to trade matters—amounts in money of work done; calculations of quantity in pages of type. Then there were the baptismal and marriage entries they had made

out, and beneath them some tremblingly-traced characters, evidently formed by the old man when in a reclining position; but, with the exception of the one word "Hardon," they were completely illegible. He then turned to the old man; but his eyes were closed, and he seemed sleeping. So he replaced book and pencil beneath the pillow, and then, passing between the beds of other sufferers, each intent upon his own misery, he came suddenly upon the smiling nurse, evidently waiting to see if there was a gratuity ready for her hand.

It was hard work parting with that shilling; but Septimus felt it to be a duty to slip it into the Jezebel's hand, and to whisper a few beseeching words that she would be kind and attentive to the old man.

"A quiet, patient old creature; you may rest quite happy about that, sir," said the nurse. "I'll treat him just as I would my own brother."

"He will get better?" said Septimus, interrogatively.

The woman screwed her lips up very tightly as she said she hoped he might, but Septimus thought of the expiring lamp and its supply of oil; and it was little of his own affairs, and the possibility of there being an entry locked in the old man's clouded memory, that he thought of as he stammered—

"Pray, do all you can for him. I am sorry I can offer you no more."

"Bless you, sir, you needn't even have done that. If it had been a guinea, it would have been all the same, and I shouldn't have thought a bit the better of you. We have a painful duty to perform here, sir, and it's an unthankful task, for there's no gratitude from the patients; but when a friend or relative makes one a little offering, why, setting aside the value, sir, it does seem to make things better, and to sweeten the toil. We never do expect any praise; while as to some of the tales the patients make up, you'd be surprised. Poor things! you see, their minds wander a bit, and they always seem to take a dislike to those who are like mothers to them. But there, sir, I always says to myself, I says, it's no use to take any notice of the poor things' whims, so long as we know we do our duty by them."

"I suppose," said Septimus, "their complaints weaken their intellects a good deal?"

"Wonderfully, I do assure you, sir. Now I shouldn't be a bit surprised if that poor gentleman, your friend, has been telling you all sorts of things?"

Septimus did not believe all that Matt had said, but he evaded the question.

"You'd be surprised, sir, if you only knew one-half the tales they make up, sir. There, I can't help it, sir—I laugh, I do, when I think of them; for we must be able to eat and drink like bore-constructors, sir, to manage a quarter of what they says. They say we eat their chicking and jelly, and drink their wine and gin, and fancy things the doctors order for them. Some even goes further than that; but then the doctors know what people are in such a state, and don't take any notice of them."

"'Mrs. Hardon: medicine and attendance.' I wonder whether it's true, or only a sick man's fancy?"

muttered Septimus, aloud, as he went down the steps, and stood once more in the open air, feeling as though a weight had been raised from his spirits. "Poor creatures, poor creatures! left to the tender mercies of those women, and often neglected and left to die."

"No, no, no! pray don't say so," sobbed a voice at his elbow. "It's bad enough, I know; but not so bad as that, please!"

And then a burst of sobs choked the speaker's utterance.

Septimus started, for the voice seemed familiar, and he saw beside him a tall, well-dressed female, with a thick wool veil drawn down over her face, so that he could not distinguish her features.

"I knew you again, Mr.—Mr.—Mr.—you did tell me your name, but I've forgotten it; and I asked him, and he said—but dear, dear," she sobbed, "can you see that I've been crying? And have you been in that dreadful place?"

"Yes," replied Septimus; "but I really do not know to whom I am talking."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" sobbed the woman, "it's me; you know me, that you called on in Chiswell-street; and I can't take up my fall, for my poor eyes are so red with crying, and people would see. Registry-office for servants, you know; and—oh, dear, oh, dear!" and she sobbed more loudly than ever.

"Indeed, I beg your pardon," said Septimus, kindly; "but I could not know you through that thick veil."

"Then you could not see that I had been crying?" sobbed the poor woman.

"No, indeed," replied Septimus, "and—"

"Don't speak to me yet," ejaculated Miss Tollicks; "I'm almost heart-broken, and you set me off, saying those cruel words. I'd give anything for a place where I could sit down and have a good cry, if it was only a doorstep, where people could not see me. I'm nearly blind now, and can't tell which way to go. It's ever so much worse than any trouble I ever had with my business."

"Take my arm," said Septimus, gently, after an apologetic glance at his shabby clothes. "Lean upon me, and we'll walk slowly down this street. It is quieter here, and you will feel relieved soon."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Miss Tollicks, taking the proffered arm, and still sobbing loudly; "but you are sure that people cannot see I have been crying?"

"Certain," said Septimus, as they walked on.

"And so you think," said Miss Tollicks, "that they are neglected and die, do you, Mr. Hardon? And I'm afraid the poor things are. I've just been to see my poor sister, that the doctor recommended to go in, and she's been telling me such dreadful tales about the nurses; and I can't tell whether it's the truth, or whether the poor thing is only light-headed. It was horrible to listen to her, that it was; and you've been to see some one too, Mr. Harding?"

"Yes," replied Septimus, "the poor old gentleman who was with me when I called upon you."

"Dear, dear, dear, what a sorrowful world this is!" sobbed Miss Tollicks; "nothing but trouble—always trouble. And how is he, poor man?"

"Not long for this world, I fear," said Septimus, softly.

"And did he say anything about the nurses, too?" sobbed Miss Tollicks.

"Yes, yes," said Septimus, hastily; "but it can't be true. No woman could be such a wretch."

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Harding; but is my veil quite down? there—thank you. We're strange creatures, and we are either very good or else very bad—especially servants, Mr. Harding," sobbed Miss Tollicks. "I'm afraid that it's all true enough, and if they'd only let me stop and nurse my poor sister, I wouldn't care. The business might go and take its chance, for what's the good of money without life? But oh, Mr. Harding, I did ask my landlord, and he said—and he said—but oh! you must not ask me now."

And here the poor woman burst out sobbing, quite hysterically, so that more than one person turned round to gaze upon her. But her troubles attracted little notice, for this was no uncommon scene in the long dreary street: the inhabitants were too much accustomed to the sight of weeping friends coming from the great building, where, but a few minutes before, they had been taking, perhaps, a last farewell of a dear one whom they would see no more—a dear one whose face was perhaps already sealed by the angel of death; a sad parting, maybe, from one whose hopeless malady had rendered it necessary for the interior of the hospital to afford the attentions that took the place of those that would have been supplied at home. Poverty and sickness, twin sisters that so often go hand-in-hand, brought here their victims to ask for aid; and those who dwelt hard by paid little heed to pallid out-patients seeking their daily portion of advice, some on crutches, some leaning upon the arms of friends, some in cabs. They were used to painful scenes, and knew by sight patient, student, and doctor; and therefore hardly bestowed a thought upon the sad couple passing slowly down the street, at the end of which Septimus saw Miss Tollicks into a cab, and left her unquestioned, to pace slowly back towards Bennett's-rents.

He walked on and thought—thought of all his troubles, and the want of decision in his character; of how he ought boldly to have investigated his uncle's claim, setting aside his own feelings for the sake of those dependent upon his arm for their support; and he sighed again and again as he took himself to task. And then a prayer rose to his lips as he recalled the scene which he had left—a prayer fervently breathed there, in the midst of London's busy flowing stream, as fervent as ever emanated from devotee kneeling in some solemn fane—a prayer that, for the sake of those at home, he might be spared from the smiting of sickness; and then he shuddered as he remembered his father's words, and thought of his wife's increasing helplessness.

"Stark mad! Yes, I must have been," he muttered; "and yet no, why was I to crush down my unselfish love?"

And then he stopped short, to examine himself as to whether his love had really been unselfish. But he passed on again unsatisfied, lost in abstracting

thoughts, heedless of being jostled here, pushed there, a walking ensample in his short walk of what he was in his longer journey of life—a man whom every one would expect to give place, while he full readily made way. Now he was shouted at by a cabman as he crossed the road, then dragged back by a crossing-sweeper as he was about to step in front of an omnibus. But he looked elate, and thoughts of a brighter future rose before his mind as something seemed to whisper that all would yet be well; and, as brighter thoughts came lighting in upon his heart's dark places, he saw old Matt well, and finding the entry that should restore him to ease and comfort; his wife and Lucy happy and smiling upon him; and then his head was lifted, his form grew more erect, his nerves and muscles became terse, and, swinging his arms, he strode forward till, turning down a side-street, he set off and ran—ran hard to the bottom, in the lightness of spirit that had come over him. He had no object in view, no reason for hastening, and the act seemed one of folly in a man of his years; but he felt the desire come upon him, and he ran, inflating his chest with the free air; and perhaps there have been times when, moved by similar impulses, men of the present day have felt, if they have not acted, the same as Septimus Hardon.

On again once more, this time to come in contact with a baker, whom he swung round basket and all, and when sworn at he apologized so cheerfully, and with such an aspect of genuine contrition, that the baker closed his voluble harangue with, "Well, don't do it again, that's all." And perhaps, after all, the acts of Septimus Hardon were not of so very insane a character. True, they seemed strange for a man who had just come from a bed of sickness, and whose own affairs were in a most unsatisfactory state; but may there not have been something reactive after the oppression of much sorrow, the elasticity of life asserting itself? Be it what it may, certain it is that Septimus Hardon, aged fifty, acted as has been described, though it seemed strange conduct in a man who had suffered as he had.

Breathed again, he once more ran on, full of resolutions for the future touching the vigorous prosecution of his claim—smiling, too, as he made the vows, in doubt as to their fulfilment, for he knew his weakness; but he ran on, feeling more light-hearted than he had felt for years, till suddenly he stopped and proceeded at a more moderate pace; for he trembled for his shoes, in whose durability he had not much faith, trusting their strength but little, for, placing the standard of boot-strength at twenty-six shillings, he remembered that he stood at three shillings and ninepence, plus his old ones, and he trembled.

Near home at last, where he arrived just in time to encounter *ma mère* the sinister, with her poodles, starting to give select entertainments through the evening in the far West; and, as he turned into the court, his light-heartedness passed away, the many hopeful thoughts vanished, and he sighed, for truly it was being under a cloud literally, as well as figuratively, to enter the precincts of Bennett's-rents.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE COMMON LOT AGAIN.

ALL the renters appertaining to Bennett's were either out in the court or at door and window on the day that Mrs. Jarker was buried; while Lucy gladdened the heart of Jean Marais by taking charge of the little golden-haired child, and carrying it up to his room to see the birds and dogs. Women stood in knots talking, with their arms rolled in their aprons; and a strong smell of rum, of the kind known as "pine-apple," vended at the corner, pervaded these little assemblies. The sports of the children were interrupted, and slapping was greatly in vogue, in consequence of mothers never having known their offspring to have been so tiresome before. Hopscotch was banished from the court, tops and bottoms confiscated, and there was not a boy or girl present who, in the face of so much tyranny, would not have emigrated to some more freedom-giving district, but for the fact that there was a "berryin;" and the shabby Shillibeer hearse, and its doleful horse and red-nosed driver, already stood at the end of the court, where the public-house doors were so carefully strapped back for the convenience of customers.

The time at which the funeral would take place was already well known, but for hours past the court had been in a state of excitement which prevented domestic concerns from receiving due attention. It was an observable fact that quite a large trade was done at the chandler's-shop in halfpenny bundles of wood, consequent upon fires being neglected, and doing what fires will do, going out. Babies screamed until they were hoarse, and then fell asleep, to wake up and scream again. There were no bones broken, on account of the elasticity of the juvenile framework; but several children in the quadrupedal stage of development were known to have fallen down flights of stairs during their maternal search; while another diversion had been caused by a morsel forcing its foot through the grating over the drain, and refusing to be extricated. It was also observable that there were very few men about, and those visible confined themselves to the cellar-flap of one of the public-houses, only looking down the court at intervals.

At last there was an increased interest, for Mr. Pawley and one of his men had entered the house, women parting right and left to let them through. Then there was a buzz of excitement, for Mr. Jarker had been seen to enter the public and come out, to stand wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, apparently undecided as to which way he should go; but at length, pale and scared-looking, walking up the court and following the undertaker.

And now the Jarkers were thoroughly canvassed, and many allusions made concerning Bill's treatment of his poor wife. Worn, dejected, hard-featured women, whose lives had been as hard a bondage as that of the one passed away, but who made their brick without straw unrepining, told of her sufferings, and of how she had always been weak and sickly; while it was on all sides allowed that though, as a matter of course, a master might be a little hard sometimes, Jarker had been too hard, as she was so sickly. One thought it was the drains,

another fancied the place wasn't quite healthy; but all agreed that there was nothing better to be had at the price; while the market was so handy. What was to become of the child, too, formed a surmise in which Mrs. Sims took great interest; while, as soon as that lady's back was turned, it was universally agreed that she was "a good soul."

Another buzz of excitement. Mr. Jarker has been seen to come out with a crape scarf fastened upon his fur cap, while a short skimpy cloak hangs awkwardly from his ample shoulders. Mr. Jarker is very low-spirited, and finds it necessary to take something short once more in the way of a stimulant, and imbibes half a quartern of gin at the public-house, his emblems of woe inducing a great amount of respect being paid to him by the occupants of the place, while one end of the scarf will keep getting in his way.

Mr. Jarker is a very great man this day, and comports himself with much dignity. He feels that he is being looked up to, and that he deserves it; but for all that he seems nervous and uncomfortable, and is now fetched back by the undertaker, who regularly takes him into custody; for he rightly fears that very little would make Mr. Jarker run off altogether and show himself no more for some days, when perhaps there might be a difficulty about the payment of the expenses. Not that Mr. Pawley has much fear upon that score, for there was always a certain pride respecting a decent "berryin" at Bennett's-rents; and supposing any one was very much pressed, there were always friendly hands ready to add their mites, with the understanding that one good turn deserved another. Mr. Pawley never suffered much in his transactions at the Rents, of which place he had the monopoly; and he always made a point of insisting that all funerals should be not only what he termed economic, but strictly respectable.

"It's a dooty we owe to the departed," he would observe, while never once could he recall a dissentient, though assistance was often called in to defray the cost, and the well-known avuncular relative of the poor appealed to. Not that Mr. Pawley had very hard work to induce the poor of the district to do their "dooty" by the departed, for the desire was always there to pay the last sad rites decently and in order, even those who were obliged to stoop to get an order for a parish coffin often raising a tiny fund to induce Mr. Pawley to embellish the hard outlines of the common plain elm shell with a plate and a few rows of nails, to take off the workhouse look of the charity they grudged to accept.

Mr. Pawley managed to get Jarker safely back to the house, and then the excitement increased; for after the former gentleman had prisoned his client in a lodger's room, he came down wiping his eye, that seemed more moist than ever, and stood mute-like at the door, surrounded by half the inhabitants of the court, whom he calmly informed that *they* were coming down directly. Mr. Pawley spoke slowly and impressively, for he was a man who had not much to say, but who made the most of it, as if his words were gold, and to be beaten out to cover the largest space at the least possible cost. He considered his words of value, and as he doled them

out people listened eagerly, looking upon the day's performance as something of which not the slightest item should be lost; while Mr. Pawley made much of his funerals, regarding each one as an advertisement to procure another, as he laboured hard to impress upon the dwellers of Bennett's-rents how friendly were his feelings towards them, and how little he thought of the money.

"Now they're a coming!" he whispered, motioning the people away right and left—a very marshal of management; and then there was the shuffling of feet, the creaking and groaning of the stairs, and the chipping of the wall, as down flight after flight the coffin was carried, resting at the landings, and more than once some neighbour's door was sent flying open. Mrs. Sims' was the first, as one of the bearers backed against it, and a lodger's on the first floor was the next; but the occupiers were down in the court, and so escaped being disturbed.

At last, with the top covered with the powdery whitewash chipped from wall and ceiling, the coffin stood in the passage, then in the court for an instant, before being borne into the shabby Shillibeer hearse; while, amidst a suppressed hum of voices, more than one genuine tear was seen to fall, and more than one apron to be held up by those who saw the poor woman's remains borne away. Then back came Mr. Pawley on tiptoe, with his handkerchief to his eye, and disappeared in the house, from which he soon re-appeared with his prisoner, followed by two relatives; and, as Bill Jarker was marched down to the hearse, with his ill-fitting cloak, and long crape scarf hanging from his fur-cap, he held his hands together in a strange, peculiar way—a way that, but for the trappings of woe, would have suggested that Mr. Jarker was really in custody, and bore steel handcuffs upon his wrists.

Then there was a crowding towards the entrance of the court, to see Mr. Jarker shut in, Mr. Pawley mount beside his red-nosed driver; and then the old broken-kneed horse went bowing its head and shambling along through the streets, with no more way made for it than if its doleful load had been so much merchandise.

Septimus Hardon had stood at his window watching the proceedings, as he slowly wiped again and again his pen upon a coat-tail; for the scene brought up a sad day in Carey-street, and he could not but recall the bright-eyed, yellow-haired child he had lost; and this set him thinking of the little one upstairs in Lucy's charge. But Septimus Hardon never thought very long upon any one particular subject; and, sighing deeply, he returned to his writing, while the people in the court slowly flocked back, to form groups and talk until such time as it was necessary to get "master's tea." There was a considerable amount of thirst engendered, though, and the public-houses at the top and bottom of the court must have done quite a powerful stroke of trade that day in cream gin and pine-apple rum; for the dull soft bang of the strapped-back doors was heard incessantly. For now, *à la militaire*, people's feelings seemed to undergo a reaction; children played and hooted again unabashed; the organ-man played the Olga waltz to a select circle of youthful dancers, while admiring mammas looked

on and smiled; a party of "nigger" serenaders arrived at the lower public-house, and played and sang for a full hour, the coppers rattling in the reversed banjo freely, after the fortunes of the celebrated Old Bob Ridley had been musically rendered by a melodious gentleman of intense blackness, who had thrummed the wires of his instrument until his fingers were worn white. Then, too, after the departure of the sable minstrels, a lady volunteered a song; but she sang not, for an interdict was placed upon the proceedings by the landlord, who "couldn't stand none o' that, now." Then an altercation ensued, which ended in an adjournment, and the voluble declaration of some half-dozen departing matrons that they'd have no more to do with the goose-club.

But Mrs. Sims was not there. Ten minutes after the starting of the shabby funeral, she went up to Septimus Hardon's rooms to fetch the little girl, but had to ascend to the attic, where she found her leaning against Lucy, who was seated upon the floor, laughing at the little thing's delight as first one and then the other of the poodles stood up and carried a stick in its mouth, while the dark eyes of Jean were fixed upon the beautiful group before him, ardently, though with a speechless admiration.

With many thanks, Mrs. Sims bore away the tiny girl, whose sleeves Lucy had tied up with bows of crape, and, as she accompanied the woman down the stairs, it was only by an effort that she refrained from snatching the little one back and bearing it into her own room. But Mrs. Sims bore the prattling little thing away and seated it upon the carpet in her lodgings, when, preparing to relieve herself after so much sorrow, she took up the bellows: but as the fire was out she only made a dust, and, laying the pneumatic comfort aside, she took to "spazzums," which necessitated the sending of Marry Hann, a neighbour's child, for half a quartern of rum, which relieved the pain so much that she repeated the dose more than once, and, carrying the little girl with her, went down again for a social chat, being now insensible to pain. Half an hour had not elapsed, though, before a fresh twinge induced her to try another instalment of her "spezizzick," and now she not only became insensible to pain but to everything else. Mr. Jarker did not at once return after the funeral, but parted with his fellow-mourners without a word, after stopping at a public-house honoured by Mr. Pawley, and settling the expenses readily over some gin and beer, accompanied by pipes; and, though more than one neighbour declared they saw him enter the door quite late, and come out early next morning, it was certain that he did not go up to his attic, a place which for some time he shunned after dark.

Mrs. Sims declared she saw nothing of him, and doubtless her testimony was very trustworthy, for she had not the slightest recollection of what took place that night after the last administration of the "spezizzick," nor of how she came into her own room, till her angry husband explained. For when in the dusk of evening Lucy returned from the warehouse with a fresh pile of work, she found Mrs. Sims seated nodding upon the doorstep, with a sleeping child in her flaccid arms, and in momentary danger

of falling upon the broken flags. So, taking the little thing, Lucy bore it to her own room; and from that time forth it often came to pass that she crossed the court when Mr. Jarker was from home, and attended to the wants of the little neglected child.

Birds in London.

A CORRESPONDENT has sent to the *Standard* a piece of news which that journal believes every lover of natural history and good disciple of Gilbert White will welcome as it deserves. He was bathing in the Serpentine, when he saw a kingfisher dart out of the bushes on the island—evidently in quest of its prey. It is impossible to suppose he can have been mistaken. The kingfisher is altogether unlike any other English bird. Its brilliant colour, its square-built, powerful body, its short wings, and its rapid flight are all peculiar to itself.

Nor is the island on the Serpentine at all an unlikely place for a kingfisher to fix upon as a town abode. The water swarms, if not with small fish, yet at any rate with those aquatic insects and larvæ upon which, in default of better fare, the kingfisher will always support himself. The island itself is quiet and sheltered, and sacred to the wild fowl who yearly make their nests under cover of its bosky leafage. Here, probably, a brood of halcyons has this year been hatched out, of which our correspondent has seen the last member. For although the beautiful little bird is said by mythologists and poets to possess the magic power of stilling the fury of wind, wave, and tempest, it is yet in its own person as pugnacious a fowl as flies, with a spirit almost too vast for its tiny body.

Except during the season of breeding and nesting it is rare indeed to see two kingfishers; and even the young birds, as soon as they are able to take care of themselves, begin to fight so desperately that the family is immediately broken up. Mr. Yarrell tells us that the young kingfisher, if taken from the bed of broken fish bones at the end of an old rat's-hole that does duty for a nest, is not at all a difficult bird to rear. "They require a supply of small fish for a time"—whitebait will suit them admirably—but soon accommodate themselves to chopped beef. If kept in an aviary of sufficient size, in which they can be supplied with live minnows, they make an interesting display of their powers. There is, indeed, no more exquisite sight than that afforded in the early days of summer by a family of kingfishers. The young "branchers," whose plumage almost equals in brilliancy that of their parents, cluster on some spray overhanging the water, and twitter clamorously, while the old birds dart to and fro, or hang poised in mid-air over the stream, dropping down each moment upon their prey with unerring aim.

This happy household, however, soon falls a victim to family strife; and of a brood of kingfishers brought up in an aviary Mr. Yarrell assures us that towards the end of autumn, unless they are separated, "the strongest will be certain to kill the weaker ones, even to the last bird." "This," he adds, "has happened two seasons following to my friend, Mr. William Rayner, of Uxbridge, who, living within a short distance of the River Colne, is

able to obtain kingfishers as well as minnows." Thus, then, the probability is that the specimen seen by our correspondent is the last of its household; and that the old birds, true to their instinct, will, if not shot this winter to decorate some fair lady's hat, return next spring to their old quarters.

Few people have any notion how many strange and rare birds frequent our London parks. In the "Transactions of the Zoological Society" for the year 1863 will be found a list of no fewer than fifty-seven different kinds of birds which have been at different times either captured or observed in the gardens of the Zoological Society, in the Regent's Park, by Mr. Edward Bartlett, son of Mr. Bartlett, the superintendent. Amongst the rarer of these are the kestrel, the barn owl, the missel thrush, redwing, ring ouzel, wheatear, nightingale, great tit, long-tailed tit, hawfinch, carrion crow, great spotted woodpecker, nightjar, wild duck, moorhen, and coot. The kingfisher does not figure on the list; but it seems at first hardly credible that the birds we have enumerated should have taken up their abode, even temporarily, so near the heart of London.

Norfolk is richer in feathered tenants than perhaps any other county in England. It is, as it were, the landing-place for all birds that may by choice, compulsion, or accident, either make or find their way to our English shores; and more strange varieties have been killed or captured in its fields and hedgerows, and upon the wide expanse of its broads, than in any other part of the United Kingdom. And yet at Kimberley, Lord Kimberley's seat, only one hundred and eighteen varieties have been noticed—one less, strangely enough, than the number recorded by Waterton at Walton Hall, and little more than double the number observed by Mr. Bartlett.

The reason, of course, why the gardens of the Zoological Society should be thus favoured is not far to seek. They are "a land where birds are blessed." No gun has been fired in them for years. No bird's-nesting is allowed. The thick shrubberies and sedgy islands are never invaded or disturbed. Birds soon flock to a place where they are left at peace. Walton Hall was an island, whose owner allowed no living thing to be killed, or even molested.

Like Mr. Waterton, Lord Kimberley has taken his feathered dependents of every kind under his express protection. He has even issued an edict forbidding the slaughter of the white owl. The birds have become numerous since its promulgation; but his game has not suffered in any way. And, in a letter to that well-known naturalist, Mr. F. O. Morris, his lordship says:—"I heartily sympathize with you in your desire that the young should be trained in habits of kindness to all dumb creatures. Nothing is more hateful than the eagerness which possesses so many people to kill every wild creature that comes in their way."

As Lord Kimberley not only inculcates this rule but acts upon it, he is able to include amongst the rarer birds seen on his estate visitors no less noteworthy than the golden eagle, osprey, buzzard, kite, peregrine, and hobby, the long-eared and the tawny owl, the grey and the red-backed shrike, the raven and the hooded crow, the dipper, the quail, the great snipe, Egyptian goose, pintail duck, the sinew, the

goosander, the great crested grebe, and the exquisite little hoopoe. Our London parks can boast no such list as this. But yet a fauna of seventy-five is—for a vast city like London—wonderfully rich. We could wish, we may add, that some careful observer would make a list of the birds noticed from time to time in the Botanical Society's Gardens, which are more secluded than the Zoological, better wooded, more densely shrubbed, and less frequented.

London, indeed, especially if its more immediate environs are included, offers a most interesting field for a chatty naturalist, with keen powers of observation, of the Gilbert White school. Of the birds to be found in the parks we have already spoken. The squirrel, we are afraid, is no longer to be seen bounding from bough to bough in Kensington Gardens; and the only badger ever captured in Hyde Park was one that had escaped from Mr. Buckland's menagerie at South Kensington. But the hedgehog is occasionally to be found; the mole is not uncommon; shrew-mice are frequent; the water-rat has been seen; the old English black rat still holds his own in the Isle of Dogs, and in the large warehouses and cellars round about the docks; the large brown sewer rat is an animal of whose cunning and ferocity a century of anecdotes might well be collected. Add to these the domestic mouse, and we find that the London fauna can boast at any rate seven quadrupeds, or, to be scientifically precise, "mammals."

Of birds we have spoken before, and yet how little is known of the ways of the London pigeon, and of that still more eccentric and self-asserting bird, the London sparrow. Wherever in the City can be found a tower secure from cats and unmolested by man, pigeons will flock to it at once. The Guildhall pigeons and those in the Palace Yard at Westminster are, like their cousins of St. Mark's at Venice, a recognized institution, and so tame that you can do anything with them short of catching them with the hand.

As for the London sparrow, he is the veriest "Artful Dodger" of the whole feathered tribe—never ill, never out of spirits, never out of mischief, never quiet. In the spring he builds his great clumsy nest in our water-pipes. Down comes the rain, and, as often as not, washes the nest half-way down into the pipe, causing stoppage, leakage, overflow, and, finally, the appearance on the scene of men with long ladders, followed by a builder's bill with elaborate charges for "time" and "compo."

Like his betters, the London sparrow always pays the country a visit once a year. As soon as the wheat is ripe in the ear he emigrates into the suburban corn fields, returning only when the harvest is fully over and the sheaves are stacked. Starlings build under the eaves in St. John's Wood; swallows occasionally make their nests in the City itself; and there has been from time immemorial, and, we believe, still exists, a small rookery in Gray's Inn Gardens.

Several varieties of fish are to be found, if not in the Thames itself, yet, at any rate, in the ornamental water in the various parks; while as for insects, there are certainly three or four, each of which well deserves a monograph to itself. Add to these the

mosquito, which has lately taken to infesting Westminster and its precincts, and an English Louis Figuier might well put together a most interesting volume on "The Insect Plagues of London."

The great City, however, still waits its Gilbert White. Mr. Frank Buckland is too busy with other matters. Mr. Bartlett has his hands too full. Besides, London is so rich in antiquities that the would-be naturalist is almost certain to be diverted from his path. There is much analogy between the qualities required for a naturalist and those that are necessary for an antiquarian, as any one, indeed, can satisfy himself if he will compare the "Natural History of Selborne" with the "Handbook of London." Had Gilbert White been condemned to a London living, he would have become a Peter Cunningham. Had chance taken Cunningham into the country, he would have proved himself a second Gilbert White.

Farewell to Summer.

WHILE the inhabitants of this great city are fast asleep during the dark nights that occur generally about this period of September, many wonderful events are going on high up in the air, far above our heads. Of the nature and cause of these phenomena we think the general public are little aware. The noises proceeding from the numerous creatures that are passing over our towns in mid-air during the darkness of the night would in former days have probably been put down to the supernatural agency of ghosts and goblins. Observation, however, has taught us that the mysterious forms, shadows, and cries proceed from flocks of migratory birds, passing from one part of the earth's surface to another. More especially when the clear and frosty nights come on may be heard in the sky the rush of the wings and the wild cries of various water birds, such as wild duck, wild geese, and other water-fowl, as they are passing from the northern to the more southern regions.

Previous to speaking of the general migration of the northern water-fowl, we propose to notice the effect of the weather which has occurred lately upon the smaller "soft meat"—that is, "insect-eating" birds. The late gales of wind and cold nights have dispersed and destroyed the insect food, such as moths, beetles, flies, caterpillars, &c., upon which these birds fatten previously to their departure to spend the winter in more southern climates than our own. The late winds have also made havoc on the soft, dead-ripe fruit—such as pears, plums, elderberries, nightshade, &c.—upon which some of these birds feed. These two causes have induced many of our migratory birds to leave us before their usual time. The birds that have already left this country are as follows:—Swift, nightingale, grasshopper, warbler, sedge warbler, reed warbler, wood wren, garden warbler, wryneck, cuckoo. The turtle dove and common shrike have also left. The birds that are now fast taking their departure are as follows:—Redstart, winchat, wheatear, blackcap, whitethroats, chiff-chaff, willow-wren, yellow wagtail, tree pipit, meadow pipit, goat-sucker. During the past summer insect life has been very scarce; but, neverthe-

less, this fact has had no perceptible effect upon the numbers or breeding of these birds.

At the same time that the above-mentioned birds are shifting their habitation, others are beginning to arrive from the far north. These are the nussel thrush, fieldfare, redwing, woodlark, song thrush, blackbird, snow bunting, bramble finch, siskin, twite, and redpoles, &c. The nightshade and blackberries are very plentiful this year, and bullfinches are feeding upon them in the lanes and hedges. Kingfishers are very abundant this autumn, and may now be seen about the brooks, ponds, and lakes in the neighbourhood of London. This is the time of year that these beautiful birds take their flight from their breeding-places and fishbone-made nests in the holes of waterside banks. We understand that a kingfisher was lately seen on the Serpentine, and it is not at all improbable that when the parks are quiet, and people are not moving about, they may be observed about the Kensington Gardens waters, at the northern end of the Serpentine.

A great many kingfishers are at this time of year taken by means of the fine net. This is a net of light structure, suspended across brooks. In their rapid flight the birds do not see the net, and get caught in the meshes. We understand that when the woodcocks are migrating to this country from Norway, considerable numbers are caught in this way by light nets suspended in the line of their flight.

The reasons that prompt the little migratory British birds to venture over vast tracks of land and over large seas, knowing, as they certainly do, the proper times for their passage, when to come and when to go, are by no means clear. Nor, indeed, has it been ascertained for a certainty to what countries they resort during the winter months. It is well known, however, that they go gradually southwards to the French, Spanish, and Italian shores of the Mediterranean. In some instances they cross the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt and the shores of Northern Africa; some go even as far as Central Africa.

When these birds are on their perilous journeys of so many hundred miles' distance, fogs and adverse winds frequently cause great destruction among them. It may be recollected that not very long ago large numbers of British migratory birds were found floating in the sea, dead, off the Eddystone Lighthouse. It is probable that during their night journey from the Devonshire shores a fog overtook them, and that the bright light proceeding from the lantern of the lighthouse attracted them, and so stupefied them that they dashed themselves against the thick glass and were killed in large numbers. The fishermen who trawl for turbot, soles, skate, &c., on the Varne and ridge banks between Dover and Calais not unfrequently hear the sound of flocks of migratory birds flying overhead. The exact pace at which birds can go when on their migratory flight has been noticed. Quails are said to accomplish a hundred and fifty miles in a night, and undigested African seeds and plants have been found in the crops of these birds when they reach the French coast.

Ducks are reported to be able to fly fifteen hundred miles at one time, and the pace of the swallow and marten is put down at about nine hundred miles in twenty-four hours. Linnets and other seed-eating birds have been known to settle on the mast and rigging of ships far away from land out at sea. They will take their night's rest on the rigging, and when leaving the ship know exactly in which direction to continue their flight. It is said that the migration of birds will foretell severe weather, and it is well known by the bird-catchers that when the larks and other northern birds appear, snow and hard weather will follow the flight.

These warnings of migratory birds, though apparently insignificant, may be of vast political, and even national, importance. If the Emperor Napoleon, when on the road to Moscow with his army in 1811, had condescended to observe the flights of storks and cranes passing over his fated battalions, subsequent events in the politics of Europe might have been very different. These storks and cranes knew of a coming on of a great and terrible winter; the birds hastened towards the south, Napoleon and his army towards the north.

CONVERSATION AT A CRICKET MATCH.—Lady: "I suppose, then, when they don't run they don't have any put down to them?" Intelligent undergrad: "No, they have a duck, and two ducks make a pair of spectacles, you know." Lady (evidently much enlightened): "Oh, yes, of course!"

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Dutch the Diver:
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CHAPTER X.



HE night closed in without success, and a little party assembled in the cabin; for as the ship might sail at any time, those who occupied the place of passengers felt that it was hardly worth while to return ashore. Mr. Parkley kept a bright face on the matter, but it was evident that he was a good deal dispirited; though he chattered merrily enough, and talked to John Studwick and his sister of the beauties of the land they were about to visit.

"If we get off, Mr. Parkley," said John Studwick, quietly.

"Get off, sir?—why, of course we shall. Those two scoundrels will come off to-morrow morning penniless, and with sick headaches. The rascals!"

Mr. Parkley was reckoning without his host; for at that moment the two divers, each with twenty pounds in his pocket above the advance pay he had drawn, were on their way to London, and the man who had given the money was now forward in the darkest part of the deck, crouching beneath the high bulwarks of the large three-masted schooner, whispering with one of the men.

Their discussion seemed to take a long time; but it ended in the other man of the watch joining them, and the conversation still went on.

It was interrupted by the coming on deck of Captain Studwick, and silence ensued; while the captain took a turn round the deck, and gave an eye to the siding lights, for, as evening had come on, the vessel had been warped out of dock, and lay a couple of hundred yards out in the great estuary, fast to one of the buoys.

"We might have some of the lads taking a fancy to go on shore," he had said to Mr. Parkley, when he had complained of having to take a boat to come off; "and we shall be all the more ready to drop down with the tide. I don't want to find my crew like yours to-morrow morning—missing."

Finding all apparently quite right, and the lanterns burning brightly, Captain Studwick took another turn round the deck, peeped down into the fore-castle, where the men were talking and smoking; then went right forward and looked over at the hawser fast to the buoy, said a word or two of warning to the men, and went below.

It was now ten o'clock, and excessively dark—so dark that it was impossible to see across the deck, and the lights hoisted up in the rigging seemed like great stars. The buzz of conversation in the fore-castle had grown much more subdued, and then suddenly ceased; though a dull, buzzing murmur could be heard from the deck-house, where the dim light of a smoky lantern, hung from the roof, shone upon the bright cooking apparatus with which the place was furnished, and upon the glistening teeth of Pollo, the black cook, and Oakum, the old sailor, both smoking, and in earnest converse.

"Yes, Pollo," said Oakum, "it seemed to bring up old times, and some of our vyges; so I thought I'd come and have a palaver before we turned in."

"I glad to see you, Mass' Sam Oakum, sah, and I hope you often gin me de pleasure ob your company during de voyage. I 'spect you, Mass' Oakum, and you always 'spect colour genlum, sah, dough we use quarrel some time."

"Only chaff, Pollo."

"Course it was, sah, only chaff, and nuffum at all. And now I tink ob it, sah, I have 'plend' 'rangement here for de cooking; and when, by an' by, you find de beef too salt, and the biscuit too hard, juss you drop in here, sah, after dark, and Pollo most likely find lilly bit ob somefin nice left from de cabin dinner."

"Thanky, Pollo, thanky," said Oakum. "But what do you say, old shipmate, I think we can find the old galleons again?"

"I quite 'tent, sah, to put dis ship in de hands ob such sperienced navigator as Mass' Sam Oakum, who know all ober de world quite perfect. You tink we sail in de morning?"

"If they catch them two skulking scoundrels of divers, Pollo. I'd just like to rope's-end that Mr. John Tolly. Gets three times the pay o' the other men, and is ten times as saucy."

"Top!"

"Eh?" said Oakum.

"What dat, Mass' Oakum, sah?" said the black, whose eyes were rolling and ears twitching.

Oakum listened attentively for a few moments, and then went on.

"Nothing at all, my lad, that I could hear."

"I sure I hear somefin, sah. Let's go and see."

They both stepped out on to the deck, and stood and listened, for it was impossible for them to see, though the light from the deck-house made them

stand out plainly in view if any one else was on the watch.

They saw nothing; for, as they stepped out, a man, who was stealing aft, dropped softly down and crouched under the bulwarks.

The hawsers creaked softly as they swung in the tide, and a faint light shone up from the fore-castle hatch, while from aft there was a tolerably bright glow from the cabin skylight. Here and there the riding lights of other vessels rose and fell, as they were swayed by the hurrying waters; while the lights of the shore twinkled like stars on a black background, but, saving the rippling noise of the tide against the great schooner's side, all was perfectly still.

"False alarm, Pollo," said Oakum, leading the way back.

"No, sah," said Pollo, reseating himself, cross-legged, beneath the lantern. "I sure I hear somefin, sah, dough I no say what it was."

"I've often wished for you as a mate in a dark watch, Pollo," said Oakum, hewing off a quid of tobacco, and thrusting it into one cheek. "You would not go to sleep."

"Not ob a night, sah," said Pollo, complacently; "but I no so sure bout dat if de sun shine hot—I go sleep den fass enough."

They had hardly resumed their conversation when the man who had dropped down under the bulwarks rose, and went softly by the deck-house, walking rapidly aft to the side, where he climbed over, after running his hand along and finding a rope, slid down, and took his place in a large boat already half full.

A few moments later, and another man crept softly along the deck, went over the side, and slid into the boat.

Another and another followed, and then one man who had been waiting by the fore-castle hatch, instead of going aft, opened a sharp knife and crept forward to where the stout coir hawser was made fast to the buoy. It was drawn very tight; for the tide was running in fast, and a few sharp cuts would have divided the strands, with the result that the schooner would have drifted up with the current, and, if it had not fouled and perhaps sunk some smaller vessel in its course, have run ashore.

The man listened attentively that all was still, and, raising his knife, he began to saw through the strands, when rising, he shut the knife with a snap, and exclaimed—

"No, hang it all, I won't! It's too bad; and there's a woman aboard. Bad enough as it is."

Then, following the example of those who had gone before, he went softly aft, feeling his way along the bulwarks till his hand came in contact with the rope, and he, too, slid down into the boat.

"Well, did you cut the great rope?" whispered a voice.

"Yes, gov'nor, all right. But not deep," added the man to himself.

"Quick, then—quick, then," whispered the former speaker, "undo this little rope, and let the boat float away."

The boat's painter was loosened—but not without

rattling the iron ring through which it was run—dropped over the side with a splash, and, just faintly grating against the vessel's side, the boat glided away, appearing for a few moments in the faint glow cast from the stern windows, and then seeming to pass into a bank of utter darkness.

"I no care what you say, Mass' Oakum, sah," said Pollo, a few moments before—and his great black ears seemed to start forward like those of a hare—"I sure I hear de rattle ob a rope; and you see if dare isn't a boat under de side."

He leaped softly up, and ran on deck, followed by Oakum.

"Dere, I sure I right," whispered the black, pointing astern. "Boat full ob men."

"I can't see nowt," growled Sam. "Let's go forward and ask the look-out if they heard anything. Hear a boat touch the side, mates?" he said, aloud.

There was no answer.

"The lubbers are asleep," he said, angrily; and hurrying to where the men should have been, he found that they were missing, and ran to the hatchway. "Below there!" he shouted. "On deck here, some of yer!"

All silent; and he lowered himself down, to find a lantern burning, but not a soul there, even in the bunks, the men's kits being also gone.

"Deserted, by jingo!" cried Oakum, slapping his thigh, as he began to ascend the ladder. "Here, Pollo, run and call the skipper."

"What's wrong?" cried Captain Studwick, from out of the darkness.

"Not a blessed man, sir, left aboard."

And the captain brought his foot down with a savage stamp on deck.

CHAPTER X.—OFF AT LAST.

THE outcry brought the doctor, Mr. Wilson, and John Studwick on deck, the latter panting, and evidently in a terrible state of alarm.

"Quick, father, the boat!—save Bessy, don't mind me," he gasped.

"There's nothing to fear, my boy," exclaimed the captain, catching the young man's arm. "Only the men have gone ashore—forsaken the ship. Now go below. Here, you Oakum, what do you mean, you scoundrel? Where's Mr. Jones?"

"Here, sir," said the mate, who had hurried from his berth. "What's wrong?"

"Wrong?" exclaimed the captain, stamping about the deck in his rage. "Why, the men have forsaken the ship. What were you about?"

"I beg pardon, Captain Studwick," said the mate, sharply; "but it was my watch below. You said you would see to the first watch with Oakum."

"So I did—so I did," cried the captain. "Here, Oakum."

"You said I could go below, capen," said Oakum, gruffly.

"Did you know anything of this?"

"If I'd know'd anything of it, I should have come and told you," said Oakum. "Didn't I give the alarm as soon as I know'd?"

"Yes, yes, yes," cried the captain. "There, I beg your pardon, Mr. Jones. Don't take any notice, Oakum. It's enough to make any man mad. How

am I to face Mr. Parkley and Mr. Pugh when they come off in the morning?"

"Lads on'y gone off to have a good drink, p'raps, sir," suggested Oakum.

"Drink? No. They've been got at, and bribed or persuaded not to go. The scoundrels! I'll have them before the nearest magistrate, and punish them for this."

"Got to ketch 'em first," growled Oakum to himself.

"Look here, when did you find this out?" exclaimed the captain.

"When you heard me shout," said Oakum. "Pollo here thought he heard a noise, and we came and looked."

"And I see de boat go astern wif all de men in, sah," said Pollo, importantly.

"It's a planned thing, or the men would not have gone off like that," said the captain. "Mark my words, John, that foreigner's at the bottom of this. Did either of you see him come near the ship?"

"I did, sah," cried Pollo.

"You did?" exclaimed the captain.

"Yes, sah, jus' fore dark, I see um get in boat 'low de wharf, and two men row boat wif um."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sah, I quite sure. I see um sit in de stern, wrap up in um cloak, and smoke cigar. But he nebber came nigh de ship."

"I thought as much," groaned the captain. "Here, go below, John. The night air's chilly. There's nothing the matter, my child," he continued, tenderly, "only some of the crew have absconded." For just then Bessy Studwick, very quiet and trembling, had come to his side. "Well, gentlemen, I'm very sorry, but I could not help it, and now I shall have to ask you to share the watch with Mr. Jones and myself. Oakum and Pollo, go below. Oakum, you will take the next watch with Mr. Jones. Mr. Melton, or you, Mr. Wilson, will perhaps join me in the morning watch."

Both gentlemen expressed their willingness, and the night passed off without further misadventure.

Captain Studwick was quite right, for the Cuban hovered about the schooner until darkness set in, when, watching his opportunity, he caught the attention of one of the men, who absolutely refused to listen to him at first; but as Lauré bribed higher, and vowed that it was a mad voyage, of which he had himself repented, as he would not expose the men to the risks of the deadly coast where the treasure lay, the man began to listen.

"There are fevers all on those shores, of the most deadly kind," he whispered; "and I shall feel as if I had sent a party of good British seamen to their death."

At last his words and his money began to tell. This man was won over; and when the others were brought under the persuasive ways of the Cuban, the dread of punishment for desertion was mastered by another sovereign or two, and after his last words they gave way.

"Take your choice," he had said at last; "a dog's death and your body for the sharks in that pestilent clime, or the money I give you. You can take the

night train for London, have your run on there, and then get a good vessel afterwards."

An additional sovereign to the man he felt most likely to be his tool made him promise to cut the hawser; and then all went well for the infamous design, except that this man repented of part of his bargain, and the crew of stout, able seamen was taken off, and landed a mile or so above where the schooner lay in the tideway.

By eight o'clock in the morning Mr. Parkley and Dutch came off, to announce that they had discovered through Pollo that when he saw Tolly and the other diver they were on their way to the station, and had taken tickets for London.

"Did you ever have worse news?" said Mr. Parkley, bitterly. "It may be months before we can get others who will go; for Layman, my other man, is ill."

"Yes," said the captain, quietly.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Parkley, agast.

"Our friend, the Cuban, has seduced all the men away, and stopped the expedition."

"I'll be— No, I won't swear," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, turning red with fury. "Stopped the voyage, has he? Got my divers away, and the crew, has he? Look here, Dutch Pugh; look here, Captain Studwick. I'm a man who takes a good deal of moving, but when I do move, it takes more to stop me. I'll move heaven and earth to carry this plan out, and I'll spend every sixpence I've got, but what I'll beat that scoundrel."

"You will apply to the magistrates about the men?" said the captain; "at least, shall I?"

"No," said Mr. Parkley, sharply. "Might just as well commence proceedings against that scoundrel. Waste of time. Dutch Pugh, you'll stand by me?"

"Indeed, I will, Mr. Parkley," said Dutch, calmly, as he held out his hand.

"And I'm sure I will," exclaimed the captain.

"I knew you would," said Mr. Parkley, warmly. "I'm determined now, for it's evident that that rascal will try all he can to thwart me. Come down in the cabin, and let's see what's to be done. We'll have a meeting."

They were all seated round the cabin table soon after, and the matter was discussed in all its bearings, Captain Studwick saying that he had no fear of being able to get a dozen good men in a day or two, if they were prepared to pay pretty highly.

"Then you must pay highly," said Mr. Parkley; "but look here, every step you take must be with the knowledge that this Lauré is trying to thwart you."

"I will not boast," said Captain Studwick, "but if I get a crew on board here again, I think it will take two Laurés to trick me."

"Good!" said Mr. Parkley, beginning to brighten up. "What I want is to get off at once. It will be horrible to stay, for we shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town. The chaff was beginning last night."

"But about divers?" said the captain.

"Yes, there is the difficulty. It is not every man who will train for it, as it is a risky thing. Perhaps I may be able to train one or two of the men we get. At all events, go I will, and I will not be beaten."

"I'm afraid that would be but a poor chance," said Dutch, who sat there pale and troubled, but had hardly spoken.

"Don't throw cold water on it, Pugh, for Heaven's sake!" cried Mr. Parkley, testily.

"I do not wish to do that," said Dutch. "I wish to help you."

"Well, then," cried Mr. Parkley, sharply, "I shall take old Rasp; he'll go to oblige me, old as he is; and if it is necessary I will go down myself. I've not been down for years now; but sooner than that scoundrel shall crow over me, I'll do all the diving myself."

"There will be no necessity," said Dutch, quickly.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Parkley.

"I will go with you myself," said Dutch.

"What!" cried Mr. Parkley, joyfully. "You! You go with me? My dear Pugh, I shall never forget this."

He rose, and grasped the young man's hand with both of his own, and his face flushed with pleasure.

"Yes," said Dutch, quietly. "I will go, and with old Rasp I think we can manage."

"Manage!" cried Mr. Parkley; "why, you are a host in yourself. But look here, my dear boy. Gentlemen, you will excuse us. Come on deck."

He led the way, and Dutch followed him to the side of the schooner, where he took him by the button.

"I'm so grateful, Pugh," he exclaimed, "you can't think; but it won't do. The business would be all right with my brother, but I can't take you away."

"Why not?" said Dutch, sharply.

"Your poor little wife, my boy, I could never look her in the face again."

"For God's sake, don't mention her," cried Dutch, passionately. "There, there," he cried, mastering himself, "you need not consider that."

"But, my dear Pugh, are you not too hasty—too ready to believe? No, no, it won't do; you misjudge her. I won't let you go. In a few days all will be well again."

"Parkley," exclaimed Dutch, hoarsely, "it will never be all right again. I speak to you as I would speak to no other man. Heaven knows how I have loved that woman; but I have no home now. I shall never see her again."

"No, no, no—don't speak like that, my dear boy. You are too rash. Come, have patience, and all will be right. You shall not go."

Dutch smiled bitterly.

"You are mad just now; but it will pass off. And look here, my dear boy, it was all my fault, for getting you to take the cursed scoundrel in."

"Don't speak of it, pray," cried Dutch.

"I must, my dear boy. Now, look here; after being guilty of one wrong to that poor little woman of yours, how can I do her another by taking her husband away?"

"I am no longer her husband, and she is no longer my wife," said Dutch, sternly. "I tell you I shall go."

"No, no, I will not let you."

"I am your partner, and I shall insist upon it. Stay at home, and let me take the lead in the expedition. You may trust me."

"Better than I would myself," said Mr. Parkley, warmly.

"Then let me go. It will be a relief to me from the torture I have suffered these last weeks. Parkley, you cannot dream of what I have felt."

"Do you really, earnestly mean all this?" said Mr. Parkley, gazing in the other's troubled face.

"Mean it? Yes, it would be a real kindness."

"Time cures all wounds," said Mr. Parkley, "so perhaps it will be best; and you will make arrangements for her while you are away."

"She has the house," said Dutch, bitterly, "and what money I have. I shall write to her mother to join her. Is that enough?"

Mr. Parkley held out his hand, and the two men grasped each other's for a moment, and then turned back to the cabin.

"Mr. Pugh goes with us, Studwick. Rasp I know will come when he hears that Mr. Pugh is with us."

"Indeed!" said Dutch; "I should have thought not."

"You'll see," said Mr. Parkley, writing a few lines in his pocket-book, and tearing off the leaf. "Now, then, about Rasp. Whom can we trust to take this ashore?"

"Let me go," said Mr. Meldon, the young doctor. "I will deliver it in safety."

"You will?" cried Mr. Parkley. "That's well; but mind you don't get tampered with, nor the man this is to fetch."

Mr. Meldon started, being rowed ashore in a boat they hailed. The captain was ready to suspect every one now; and in an hour old Rasp came grumbling aboard, with a huge carpet-bag, which dragged him into the boat in which he came off, and nearly pulled him back into it when he mounted the side.

"Ah, yes, I'll go," he said, as soon as he encountered his employers on the deck. "Haint got enough clean shirts, though. I allus thought that Tolly was good for nowt, and the forrener a bad un."

"And now, Rasp, I want you to go ashore again for me," said Dutch.

"I'll take him with me," said the captain, "and keep a sharp look-out for him. Mr. Parkley is going too."

"I don't want no sharp look-outs," said Rasp, gruffly. "I can take care o' mysen."

Rasp's mission was a simple one—namely, to purchase certain articles of outfit; for, with stern determination, the young man had set his face against again visiting his home. Moreover, as if distrustful of himself, he stayed on board, meaning to remain there for good.

The captain and mate both left for the shore, leaving Dutch in charge of the vessel; and so earnestly did they work, that by nightfall they had secured six fresh men, and were hopeful of obtaining another half dozen—all they required—by the following day.

The new-comers were of a rougher class than those who had been wiled away, but for all that they were sturdy, useful men, and, anxious as the leaders of the expedition were to start, it was no time for choosing.

That night, little thinking that every action in

connection with the vessel had been closely watched with a powerful glass from the upper window of a house overlooking the estuary, Captain Studwick returned with the mate, taking the precaution to give the men plenty of liquor, and placing them under hatches for safety.

Rasp had long been back with the necessities Dutch required, bringing with him a letter, which the young man read, tore to shreds, and then sent fluttering over the side; and at last the party, feeling hopeful of success on the morrow, retired for the night, saving such as had to keep watch.

The next day, however, brought no success; not a man could be induced to undertake the voyage, of those unemployed; and, to Captain Studwick's great annoyance, he found that by some means the whole business of the voyage had been turned into ridicule, and the men he addressed responded to his questions with a coarse burst of laughter. With the determination then of sailing the next morning with the crew he had, and putting in at Plymouth with the hope of obtaining more, he returned on board, and was in the act of relating his ill-success, when Oakum hailed a boat, pulled towards them by a couple of watermen, with half a dozen sailors in her stern.

It was growing dark, but those on deck could make out that the men had their long bolster-like kits with them; and the captain's heart beat with joy as he heard, in answer to the hail, that the men had come from one of the sailors' boarding-houses, having arrived there that afternoon.

"Simpson's on West Quay," said one of the watermen. "He heard you were looking out for hands, and he gave me this."

He handed up a letter, in which the lodging-house keeper asked for five pounds for relieving the men and talking them into coming; and as the men came on deck, and proved quite willing to sign for the voyage, the money was paid, and the boat pushed off.

They were not a handsome set of men, three being Englishmen, one a Dane, and the other two Lascars—one a long, black-haired fellow; the other a short-haired, closely-shaven man, with a stoop, and a slight halt in one leg. He was nearly black, and did not look an attractive addition to the party; but the men declared he was an old shipmate, and a good hand, evidently displaying an inclination, too, to refuse to go without him, so he was included.

"I think we can set our friend at defiance now," said the captain, rubbing his hands as the men went below.

"I don't know," said Mr. Parkley. "He's one of those treacherous, cunning scoundrels that will steal a march on us when it is least expected. It's a fine night, and not so very dark; the tide serves; so what do you say to dropping down at once, and putting a few miles of sea between us and our friend?"

"The very thing I should have proposed," said the captain; "and, what's more, I say make all sail for our port, in case our friend should charter a fresh vessel and be before us."

"He would not get the divers."

"No, perhaps not; but he might make up a party

who could overhaul and plunder us. I shall not be happy till we are well on the way."

"Good, then—let's make our start. It will astonish Pugh when he comes up from his berth to find us full-handed and well on our way."

"Is he lying down, then?" said the captain.

"Yes, I persuaded him to go, as he is going to watch again to-night. The fellow is ill with worry and anxiety, and we can't afford to have him knocked up. You'll start, then, at once."

"In a quarter of an hour or so," said Captain Studwick. "Here's a large barque coming up, and we may as well let her clear us first."

Giving the word to the mate, the first half-dozen men were called up, and a couple of sails made ready for hoisting, so as to give steerage way, and the motions of the dimly-seen barque were watched.

"I don't want her to run foul of us," said the captain; "for if she did, I should be ready to swear that it was one of the Cuban's plans."

"Hardly," replied Mr. Parkley. "If any fresh hindrance is to come to us, it will be from the shore. If you take my advice, you will not let a boat approach the ship to-night."

"I don't mean to," said the captain. "All right, she'll give us a pretty good wide berth. Hallo! What's that?" he said, crossing over to port.

"Boat from the shore, sir," said one of the men.

And at the same moment came a hail out of the darkness.

"Ahoy there! Heave us a rope."

Oakum stepped forward, and was about to cast a rope down, when the captain stayed him.

"What is it?" he said, sharply. "Keep off, or you may have something through your planks," and as he spoke he peered down into the boat. "Here, Jones, keep a sharp look-out on the other side, and see that no boat comes up."

"Is that Captain Studwick?" said a woman's voice.

"Yes, and what then?" said the captain. "Now, it won't do. The trick's too clear. How many have you in that boat?"

"No one but myself," replied the same voice. "Pray, pray, let me come on board."

"Who are you, and what do you want?" exclaimed the captain. "Quick! I've no time to waste."

"Let her come on board," cried Mr. Parkley, hastily. "Don't you know her?" he whispered; "it's Mrs. Pugh." Then, leaning over the side—"Hester, my child, is that you?"

"Yes," was the hoarse reply. "Mr. Parkley, for Heaven's sake take me on board."

"There, I told you so," exclaimed Mr. Parkley. "Let down the steps."

"I tell you it's some ruse of that cursed Cuban," cried the captain, angrily. "If you give way, we shall be stopped again. Keep that boat off below there."

"No, no!" cried Mr. Parkley. "Stop! Studwick, I take the responsibility on myself. Oakum, lower the steps, and throw that rope."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old sailor. "Am I to do it, sir?" he continued, to the captain.

"Yes, if he wishes it," was the testy reply. And

then, in a low voice, he said to the mate, "Slip the hawser, and haul up the jib and staysail. I'm going to the wheel."

His orders were rapidly executed, and the long, graceful vessel began almost imperceptibly to move through the water.

"If it is any trick," said the captain, as he went aft to the man he had stationed at the wheel, "it shall take place at sea. What's that?"

He turned back instantly, for at that moment what sounded like a slight scuffle was heard by the gangway he had left.

(To be continued.)

Toad's Meat.

"**P**REJUDICE, sir—rank, obstinate prejudice; the old English conservative hatred of anything new."

And my friend, the Reverend Phil Morel, incumbent of Mistey Parva, stooped, culled something from beneath a tree, and placed it in the japanned candlebox he wears slung from his shoulders, and as he spoke he shut the lid with a vicious snap.

"What's him a-doin'?" said a small boy in a smock frock.

"Pickin' o' toerd stoods. He ea-erts frog's meat, he do," said his companion, a fine specimen of what can be done on ten shillings a week without parish help.

And then the two round-eyed young gentlemen plodded off as if carrying their heavily-booted legs.

"There," said my friend, "that is a specimen of the prejudice—the blind determination not to learn. As the child is, so is the man; and the parents of these benighted little creatures allow tons of wholesome and delicious food to rot yearly where it is spread by the bountiful hand of Nature for their eating. I tell my parishioners, I show them, I point out the differences; but they grin at me, and people call me eccentric and bitten with a love for ungodly meats; while, because some of the fungi of our country are virulently poisonous, all are banned, and I cannot make a single disciple."

We continued our walk along the borders of a pleasant woodland, tinged with the gorgeous colours of the autumn, when, sceptical myself, I stopped suddenly, to perpetrate what I considered would be a sublime touch of humour.

"Here you are," I said, stopping beneath the wide-spreading limbs of an oak tree, and picking up a fungus. "Here's enough for a meal here."

"Thanks," said my friend, smiling, as he carefully cut off the slug-eaten parts and placed it in the candle-box.

"Why, you don't mean to say those brown and yellow fellows are eatable?" I said.

"Eatable!" said my friend, contemptuously; "why, sir, that is *Boletus Edulis*, a delicious mushroom. But, stop, don't pick that one at your feet, that is too old; decomposition has set in, and it is decidedly unwholesome—poisonous, if you will; and because at times foolish people have devoured half-rotten mushrooms—bad when picked, or kept until unsound—and suffered for their folly, there is a fearful outcry against what ought to have been a delicacy. Why, every kind of food, sir, when de-

composing is unwholesome, and acts as a poison upon the system, in spite of the vitiated taste which devours game in a state that must be seen to be admired. But look here, my dear fellow," said my friend, pausing, and quite out of breath, "this young fungus here is not merely wholesome, but delicious. Look here."

I looked and spoke, as, quite regardless of the injury to his clerical black trousers, my friend actually climbed a few feet up an oak tree, and began carving from the bark what appeared to be a brown-ered excrescence.

"Why, what now?" I said.

"What now?" he said, "why, rumpsteak swimming in gravy, sir. Nature's riches assuming the form of *Fistulina Hepatica*, whose juice were fit for an Apicius; but just brush the green off my elbow. A—a—thank you."

We turned into the wood through one of the nut-edged paths, and before we had gone many yards he stooped and began thrusting aside the hazel twigs, to obtain a cluster of rich, golden-ribbed, cup-shaped fungi.

"Look here! riches again: the delicious *Chanterelle*, used at State feasts, and loved of Freemasons. Here again—what do you think of this?"

"Looks like a vegetable cracknell," I said.

"Precisely, my dear fellow. This is the *Hydnum Repandum*. Just like oysters, sir."

The candle-box began to fill—filled—and overflowed into my friend's pockets; and then I saw that he had a division in the tin receptacle for new species, of which he found several—at least new to him; while over one cinnamon-looking mushroom I stuck fast, and refrained from asking more scientific names, since, though no edible, the *Cortinarius Glutinosus* took some digesting.

Crossing the little wood, after rejecting scores of inedible kinds, we once more stood in a field.

"Here we are," said my friend. "The *Champignon*, always delicious; and, really what luck you have—what do you think of that, now? Ah! don't kick it."

I picked from amongst the long grass a large round fungus, that seemed made on purpose to play football; examined its skin—like the finest of white kid—and passed it to my friend, who, puzzled what to do with it, ended by placing it in his hat, and covering it with a handkerchief.

"Baby's head!" he replied, scornfully, to a remark of mine concerning its resemblance to part of an infant. "Do you like sweet-bread, sir, or brain fritters? Why, this is the giant puff-ball, *Lycoperdon Giganteum*—a delicacy, if cut in slices, egged and crumbed, and fried in butter. But there, you shall dine with me to-day, and I will send you away rejoicing."

"To the doctor's," I said, with a touch of the fine satire at which I have before hinted; but the look of contempt I met crushed me, and I could read upon the Rev. Phil Morel's curled lip the word "prejudice."

"Now let us ascend the hill," he said, "and go where the winds sigh through the long rows of pines. I will show you some treasures there."

I followed him, and we soon stood where the tall,

straight trunks formed innumerable vistas, while our feet glided upon the smooth needles.

"Look, look!" cried my friend, starting hastily forward, and tripping over a pine stump, to fall headlong and scatter his fungoid treasures from his tin horn of plenty.

"Was that the acrobatic feat you wished me to remark?" I said drily, as I helped to pick up the scattered fungi.

"Pooh, nonsense!" said my friend, picking a very objectionable-looking, leprous toadstool, of a dingy grey colour, and covered with rough, warty scales, as if the fungus were moulting. "Pooh, nonsense, sir! this is a very choice—a very rare specimen here—the *Hydnum Imbricatum*. We really are in luck to-day."

"But you surely will not eat that toad-skinned affair," I said.

"My dear fellow," was the reply, "appearances are always deceptive. This toad-backed affair, as you term it, is good, and this, and this, and this is delicious: all fine specimens of the treasures I named—a fungus so palatable that it is called *Lactarius Deliciosus*, the orange-milk mushroom."

"Very good," I said; "then here's another."

And I picked and presented the fungus by my feet.

"Not at all," he said. "There you are wrong: that is one of the noxious agarics; and see, the milk it exudes is white when broken. Just taste it."

"What, I? Not I."

"But just in the cause of science. See—I do."

After so good an example I could not, of course, refuse; but I behaved very indelicately the next moment, spitting and sputtering about to free my tongue from an acrid burning sensation, like the compound decoction of stinging nettles or molten lead.

"Virulent, isn't it?" said my friend.

"Rather," I said, applying my handkerchief to the insulted member.

"But here is another of the good ones; and here is one strong distinction—the milk here is of a bright red colour, like molten sealing-wax, while it ultimately turns green or blue."

"But you have not one true mushroom," I said.

"True mushroom!" said my friend; "why, sir, these are true mushrooms. But I presume that you mean the common field mushroom—the *Agaricus Campestris*. If so, I have not, for they are snatched up directly they appear. If I see one, of course I pick it up; but I scarcely trouble myself about them when I find in plenty some thirty excellent edible kinds. Of course you are aware that upon the Continent people do not neglect the bounty of Nature as we do here, for fungi are largely sold in the markets."

I dined that day with the Reverend Phil Morel, feeling somewhat like a member of the Acclimatization Society; but truly good was the food which he set before me. Slices of puff-ball fried are most delicate; Champignons are excellent; *Boletus Edulis* is as good as the common mushroom; *Fistulina Hepatica* is something to smack your lips over if you are not a Sidney Smithite, and love gravy; while *Lactarius* the delicious, the *Hydnum*, and *Chanterelles* are even fragrant in their rich, meaty fla-

vour. But at first I was disposed to say, with the immortal Sam Weller, "It's the seasonin' as does it;" while, after all said and done, the cook has much to do with it. But then, with what is it not so, and how seldom do we even get a potato as it should be?

And now I consider myself a convert to the belief of my friend the Rev. Phil Morel, who pats me affectionately upon the back, calling me a man and a brother, when he finds me collecting; while there are others who turn tongue-thrusters, and talk of another lunatic in the place. But I must do my friend the credit of saying that, although I poach in his most cherished preserves, he never evinces the slightest jealousy; for there exists a kind of masonry amongst the persecuted fungus-eaters. We send presents to one another. The other day I received a dozen delicious specimens of *Helvella Crispa*—a compliment I was able to repay with a "baby's head" off which I ate a slice upon dining with my friend. But, in spite of all that is said, the labouring people in the neighbourhood will not be convinced, but keep to the one kind, declaring all else to be poison.

Fungus-hunting may certainly appear to be a very tame thing to some; but to a working man who, after his six days' toil, acts sensibly, and, after the worship due, seeks the far-off woodlands and fields, to feast his eyes upon the beauties of Nature, inflate his lungs with the pure breath of heaven, and stretch his cramped, work-contracted muscles, there may be some satisfaction in filling his pockets or handkerchief or basket with what I know, from my own experience, to be delicacies. There are those, doubtless, who will tell me I am advocating misuse of the Sabbath-day, but I must confess to having often returned myself from a Sunday afternoon walk with pockets filled with edible and botanic specimens of the works of the Great Creator; while many of those whom I address in these columns would consider it a lapse of duty to wife and family if they stole a working day. But anywhere round London, at the distance of a few miles beyond where the monster metropolis has not stretched forth its tendril-like brick and mortar arms, a basket may be filled at any time during these autumn days. Ask any one whose restless spirit has led him from his bed before dawn, to tramp through dewy fields mushrooming, what success he has had, and how looks the basket. Why, it is a battle—a competition who shall get up earliest, get his feet the wettest, and bring home the finest of the delicacies after tramping the greatest number of miles.

I ask you not to go at cold, wet hours, shivering from your bed, but when the sun shines warm and golden; and not so much into the fields as into the shady woods, where the breezes whisper, the golden network lies, the pine sheds its odorless scent, the late-day violets and primroses blow—yes, even now, while I write, in the early part of October, even as I go again and again, surrounded perhaps by merry voices, whose happy owners dash from dell to dell, hunting for the treasures amidst hazel stub and mossy sweep, under fir and oak, everywhere abundant, and yet lying rotting without a hand to gather. Breakfast, dinner, tea—at any meal good; dried on

strings for winter use, or bottled in powder to give a charm to the homely hash—a dish that, perhaps, some of my readers may have before now heard of—turned into ketchup, or eaten in the shape of pickles; truly, it seems a sin that these luxuries, nearly all equal to, and some surpassing, the ordinary mushroom, should be so neglected from ignorance and prejudice; for which, though, I must own there is some excuse, since many kinds are really deadly in their properties. So much praise may seem out of place when but a few weeks since a whole family was poisoned, one daughter even to death, by poisonous fungi; but, after all, does not this show how necessary is a little knowledge upon such a subject? And though a little knowledge is said to be a dangerous thing, yet in this case I maintain it is not; and that a very little attention to the subject would teach any one to discriminate between what is noxious and what is good for food.

I may be told that the works upon the subject are costly, and too scientific for the use of ordinary people, and with regard to some this holds good; but a very excellent treatise may be obtained upon edible mushrooms, well illustrated, for some five or six shillings, which a working man would find well invested in Mr. G. Worthington Smith's "Mushrooms and Toadstools," with its two sheets of coloured lithographs, worthy of framing; while two excursions—aye, even one—should give the reader in return mushrooms enough to make nearly the cost of the book in ketchup; while for those who say they cannot spare so much, there is the food department of the South Kensington Museum, with the large engravings upon the walls illustrating which of the fungus tribe are edible, and which noxious.

And now a few words upon the other side of the question. Care must be exercised, for the virulent kinds have a strong resemblance to the useful—a resemblance, however, that grows less and less to the person who carefully compares and examines, till a moment's glance is sufficient to discriminate. But in every case where there is any doubt, it is better to reject; for edible fungi are not scarce articles. Again and again, while walking in the fields I come across the soiled and broken remains of the giant puff-ball, which forms a favourite missile for pelting boys. Young geese! little do they know how good and wholesome a delicacy they have destroyed. As for the ordinary Champignon, certainly it has not quite so bad a name, but the eaters are few and far between; though, once partaken of, they would never again be rejected, for I do not hesitate to declare them delicious. But care must be used; and a little knowledge, attained through very little study, and the exercise of moderation are enough to make a fungus-eater, which means a fungus-lover. Many of the cases of poisoning by mushrooms have been due to the fact that they were old and semi-putrescent, or badly cooked—circumstances sufficient to have produced a sharp attack of illness from the eating of meat—especially pork or fish—in the same state. The necessity for using them fresh is absolute; for specimens that I have gathered overnight, apparently sound, have been swarming with maggots in the morning. I consi-

der them to be even more delicate than fish in this respect, and therefore their rapid change should not be brought forward as a proof of their not being wholesome.

The horse mushroom, champignon, scaly mushroom, hydnum, plum mushroom, variable, chantarelle, puff-ball, and edible tribe, I have eaten myself, and can both appreciate and recommend; while these form only a fourth of the kind that are of economic value, while, of course, the ordinary, familiar mushroom forms an article for the table when it can be found.

Stamboul in Decay.

IN several recent conversations which I have had with some officers of the British fleet who were here during the Crimean war, I have been surprised to hear them declare that they could not perceive any changes to have taken place in Stamboul and its environs since the date of their first visit. Though I was not there myself during the Crimean war, I have acquired such a knowledge of the condition of the place at that time as has enabled me to satisfy those who are unconscious of change that their memory or their faculty of observation must be defective. The disappearance of the walls of Galata; the removal of the Galata gates, which, at the period of the Crimean war, used to be closed at nightfall; the appearance of steamboats plying for hire on the Bosphorus; the unwonted spectacle of tramways on both sides of the Golden Horn; the extraordinary apparition of a rope railway in a tunnel from Galata to Pera, and the gratifying existence of good carriage roads from Pera to Therapia, and from Therapia and Buyukdere to the reservoirs and aqueducts of Belgrade, have only required to be mentioned by me to convince my friends that, even in externals, Constantinople has been greatly changed since they first knew it.

It is not of such changes as these, however, that I propose to write to-day. The changes which affect me most sensibly are those which have taken place since I first came here, very little more than three years ago—changes which have come upon us so gradually that we cannot realize their full magnitude without an exertion of memory. I recollect that, in one of the earliest letters which I wrote to you from here, I alluded to the gay and brilliant crowds which filled the streets; to the handsome carriages and the mounted escorts of the Pachas and their families; to the numerous and well-equipped horsemen who thronged every road; and to the outward appearance of ease, and comfort, and wealth by which the capital, though it was inwardly hastening to decay, was then pre-eminently distinguished.

The scene which meets my gaze now, as I take my daily walks through the streets, is widely different. Of the many handsome carriages which I was wont to see, a vast number are rotting in the deserted courts of their owners, whilst others have shared the fate of the "high-mettled racer," and have become "hacks at the last." Of the thousands of handsome Hungarian and Austrian horses which adorned this city when first I came here, the greater

part have perished on the battle-field or on the march.

Private carriages are now rarely seen. The Ambassadors and a few wealthy foreigners have their carriages; but hardly any Turk, however highly placed he may have been, has been able to retain his carriage or his horses. Some of the Ministers, perforce, have theirs; for Constantinople is a great straggling place, and they would never be able to transact their business if they walked from one place to another. But in most cases their escorts have been altogether abolished, and in the remaining instances they have been greatly curtailed.

When first I came here, Mahmoud Nedim Pacha was Grand Vizier, and was wont to drive out with an escort of from thirty to forty horsemen. Now Savet Pacha drives moderately through the streets with an escort of two, or, at the very utmost, of four horsemen. The daily transit of Prince Youssef Izzeddin from the Palace of Dolmabaghtche to the Seraskierat and back again from the Seraskierat to Dolmabaghtche, was wont to attract a crowd of sight-seers. When along the line of road it was known that the son of Abdul Aziz was approaching, all traffic was suspended. An advanced guard of cavalry cleared the way. Equerries with their whips, and soldiers with the flat of their swords, chastised the hamals and the arabadjis who knowingly or unavoidably lingered in the road. Then, when the road was clear, there swept by, at full gallop, a carriage drawn by six horses, in which sat a sullen, scowling, evil-browed young man, who turned his head neither to the right nor to the left, and evidently held the gaping crowd in the most profound contempt.

This went on day after day, until one fatal night in the spring of 1876, when Prince Youssef Izzeddin, with his father and all the other members of his house, was seized in the Palace of Dolmabaghtche, and ferried across the blue water to Stamboul. From that day unto this, Prince Youssef Izzeddin, who for several years was regarded as a possible successor to his father, has been as dead to the world as if on the night of his arrest the Bosphorus had closed on him for ever.

When first I came here, the Sultan, on the occasion of his weekly visit to the mosque, attracted, and with good reason, a vast crowd of spectators. Thousands who had seen the procession more than once were willing to witness it again and again. Now, when my English friends ask me, as they invariably do ask me, whether it is not their bounden duty to see the Sultan go to the mosque, I am obliged to advise them not to waste their time.

In the days of Abdul Aziz, the Sultan rarely went twice in succession to the same mosque. You had to rise and take counsel early in order to discover his plan for the day. You hurried from place to place, through an eager and excited crowd, before you could arrive at the proper standpoint. You saw crowds of brilliantly-dressed women on the terraces, the walls, and the house-tops; the roads were lined by the finest and most handsomely-equipped troops in the world; and the stirring strains of wild Turkish music at once astonished and charmed your ear. The very crowd gave you matter for reflection,

for in it you might see representatives of every one of the races and tribes which the Sultan of that day ruled. And the Sultan himself was a presence to behold. Every one knew that Abdul Aziz was a tyrant—a tyrant who was only not sullen when he was passionate; a man who, though he was sensual, was still brutal to women, who was utterly corrupt, a glutton and a miser, who had belied all the promises of his youth, and had brought to the very verge of destruction the empire which he had been expected to save.

Still, every one knew that he was a master of men—a monarch of strong will and great resolution—and all felt, as they gazed on his stern face, that in him all the pride and all the passions of his haughty and violent house were concentrated; and that as he looked, so also must have looked the Murads, the Bajazets, and the Solymans of the olden time.

Widely different is the scene which we witness now. Sultan Abdul Hamid comes quietly down through the gardens of Yildiz Kiosk, to a little mosque which stands at the entrance to the gardens, and is visible there, and there only. There are troops and there are spectators; but the troops have lost their dash and *elan*, and the spectators look on languidly. Abdul Hamid has as many virtues as his uncle had vices; but he has been unfortunate, and in this country we take no interest in misfortune.

Changes such as those which I have described have taken place in every scene and in every circle. The weekly gatherings at the Sweet Waters of Europe, and the Sweet Waters of Asia, and in the Khedive's garden at Emirghian, have lost all their verve and brilliancy. At Buyukdere the perhaps calculated liberality of the Russian Embassy lends to the charming quay somewhat of its old grace and beauty. At Therapia Madame Fournier and Lady Layard do all in their power to lessen the general gloom. At the Prince's Islands the rough vitality of the British fleet supplies the islanders with countless unwonted enjoyments; but everywhere else life is flat, dull, stale, and especially unprofitable.

Trade is so stagnant, and speculation so dead, that a great many wealthy Greeks have gone away with their families to Italy, France, and England for a holiday of several months' duration. There has been quite an alarming exodus of commercial talent lately, and it is due entirely to the belief on the part of the emigrants that nothing worth the doing can be done here at present. Trade is absolutely dead. Retail tradesmen will not renew their stocks, and the Custom-house is absolutely empty.

And here let me make a remark with regard to the trade of Constantinople, which has often occurred to me of late, and which may perhaps be thought deserving of attention. Constantinople was formerly, and is perhaps still, regarded as a commercial port of unrivalled excellence; and certainly the physical features of the place justify this belief. But it is worthy of note that the introduction of steam has materially lessened the importance of Constantinople as a centre of trade. Formerly, and before the age of steam, Constantinople was a collecting port. Large English sailing vessels anchored in it, and were fed by small coasting vessels, mostly owned by Greeks, which collected produce from all the ports

in the Black Sea and the Marmora, and even from some of the ports on the Asiatic shore outside the Dardanelles.

The introduction of steam has altered all this. Large English steamers come here laden with coal, which they sell at the ship's side; and they then go up the Black Sea to seek their cargoes for the return voyage. They even take in cargoes at Rodosto and Ismidt; and when the railway system of Turkey is what it ought to be a still larger part of the produce of Roumelia and Anatolia will be intercepted at Rodosto and at Ismidt, and will never reach Constantinople at all. No doubt trade may be coaxed to Constantinople. The *prestige* of a capital is easily maintained, and not easily lost. The land in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople, whether in Europe or Asia, may be made enormously productive. There is much mineral wealth in the vicinity of the city, and it is possible that some of the once famous Turkish manufactures may be revived; but it is absolutely certain that, if the resources of the district around Constantinople be not developed, the commercial importance of the city will dwindle from year to year. Steam has quite destroyed all the advantages which were derived from situation.

The changes to which I have alluded have told fearfully upon the incomes of the wealthy and the middle classes. A large number of people here derive their income from the rents of house property. When first I came here house rent was enormously high. It had been very high for a long time. The late Mr. Nassau Senior, in the account which he wrote of Turkey rather more than twenty years ago, deplored the ill-fate of an English lady who had set up a school for girls in Pera, and had been ruined because she had been compelled to pay £550 per annum for her house. She could get the same house now for a fourth part of the money; but then she would not be much better off, for now she would find no scholars. I live in a house which was built in 1860, which is in perfect repair; and which is in a most desirable situation. I know exactly what it cost the proprietor to build his house and lay out his garden, and I know that the rent which I pay him does not yield him one-half per cent. upon his outlay. Still, he is a comparatively fortunate man, for there are many hundreds of house proprietors who are getting absolutely no return at all for a large part of their outlay. And it must be borne in mind that there is nothing to compensate for these disadvantages.

After making all proper allowance for the depreciation of the currency, it is certain that the necessities of life are much more costly than when I came here. Some articles—such, for instance, as charcoal and milk, which are to a certain extent representative articles—are three times dearer than they were three years ago. This is so well known that the officers of the Consular establishment here have obtained from the flinty hearts of the officials of the English Treasury a provisional addition to their salaries, to meet their increased expenditure. But this abatement of outward show and splendour, this stagnation of trade, this loss of fortune, this pressure of necessity, might perhaps be endured for

a short time if we had before us any prospect or even hope of improvement. Unfortunately, we have no such prospect at present. In vain we whistle for the favouring breeze; in vain we scan the leaden sky to find a promise of coming sunshine.

I have before endeavoured to give some information with regard to the financial position of the Turkish Government, and to point out that unless an improvement of Turkish finance can be effected, no other improvement is possible. It does not seem to be sufficiently understood in England that the Treaty of Berlin has taken from Turkey at least three millions of net revenue. I have no doubt that, if they were properly administered, the provinces which yet remain to Turkey might be made to yield an ample compensation for those which have been taken away.

To whom are we to look for this proper administration?

Three years ago, when, though there was a cloud of trouble in Bosnia, the cloud was as yet no bigger than a man's hand, statesmen were wont to comment upon the weakness of the Turkish Administration, to declare that it was powerless for good, and to see in that weakness a source of danger to Europe. Are the weakness and the danger less great now? If the Turks could not set their affairs in order when the Empire was intact, when the army was on a peace footing, and when the Sultan's subjects, if not absolutely prosperous, were at least in tranquil enjoyment of their fields and homesteads; is it reasonable to believe them equal to the task now that whole provinces have been lopped off from the empire, now that the provinces which remain are overrun by a helpless crowd of wanderers, now that the fields have been devastated and the forests destroyed, now that the beasts of burden have perished from the face of the land, now that the wealth of the nation—such as it was—has disappeared; and now that a vast army, clamorous for pay, must be maintained, because without pay it cannot be disbanded?

No one doubts the willingness of the Sultan to introduce reforms; but all must be doubtful of his power. To whom, then, are we to look for the restoration and reorganization of the Turkish Empire? Who is it that can raise up this prostrate, emaciated, bleeding, mutilated carcass? The task would have been sufficiently difficult three years ago, but its difficulties are well nigh insuperable now that the resources of the nation have been wasted, and the spirit of the monarch and his people has been broken by reverses, sufferings, and privations of unexampled severity.

A DOUBTFUL CASE.—A man had his hair cut the other day at a black barber's, and after the barber had finished the head was the worst looking job ever turned out in Detroit. The man was hopping mad as he looked into the glass, and he roared out—"Why, you fool, you don't know anything about hair-cutting!" "Dat's so, boss," said the owner of the shop, coming forward. "I told him to take your head to learn on, but it don't 'pear to me dat he'll ever make much of a barber!"

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XXXV.—A BATTLE: SCIENCE WINS.

"WHAT! another operation?" said old Matt, with a groan.

"To be sure," said the house-surgeon, cheerily. "Why not?"

"But I'm so much better," said Matt; "and I've no end of work to get through."

"I dare say, my man," said the surgeon, sadly; "and so we all have; and I fear that when the day comes upon which we are called away we shall have as much to do as ever."

"But I'm so much better now—all but my head, sir; and I can't quite think as I used to. Things bother me, and when I want to remember one particular matter, I get confused."

"We shall put you all right this time, my man, and then start you off, to make room for some one else. We don't want a parcel of great lazy fellows here, fattening on our wine and jelly."

Old Matt smiled grimly, as he said—

"I say, sir, is it really necessary?"

"Why, of course, my man. We did you a great deal of good last time, did we not?"

"Ye-e-e-s, yes," said Matt—"you did, certainly, sir; but is it necessary that my poor old carcase should be touched again? It aint for the sake of experiment now, is it, sir? I'm afraid, you know, you'll kill me; and, just for the sake of being fair, as you've had one turn at me, wouldn't it be better to try it on some one else—on some other subject?" And, "Oh, dear," thought the old man to himself, "what a difference between a Queen's subject and a doctor's subject!"

"Pooh, nonsense, old friend!" said the surgeon, laughing. "We'll make a man of you again; so cheer up, or you'll be working your nerves too much. Why, you've picked up wonderfully this last day or two."

"What's the use of picking up, sir, if you get knocking me down again, eh, sir?"

The surgeon smiled and continued his round, and old Matt sat and grumbled by his bedside, for he was now up, and able to walk about the ward.

"Now, let's see," muttered the old man. "I always did fancy, and it always seems so, that the more you try to think straightforward of a thing, the more it bothers you; so let's try and get round to it back-way, if I can. Well, here goes. Now, here's Mr. Septimus Hardon—a man—well, not clever, but what of that? I hate your clever men; they've no room to be amiable, or time to be generous. He's a good one, and that's sufficient. Well, he's kept, say, for sake of argument, out of his rights by his rogue of an uncle. Now, he proves his baptism and his father's marriage, and then he wants to prove the date of his birth to have been after the marriage. Easy enough, that seems; but how to do it, when t'other party has took possession, and declares all the other way. Doctors' books will do it, failing any other means; and as we do fail other means, why, we want the doctor's books. I tell you what it is; I believe we have both bungled the matter from beginning to end, and ought to have gone to a good

lawyer. But there, what's the good of talking? We had no money, and people without money always bungle things. Now, where's the doctor's books, or the doctor? Doctor's dead—safe; but, then, are his books dead—cut up—burnt? That's the question. I say no; because I'm sure I saw that entry somewhere. And here's the nuisance: when I was situated so that it would have been almost a blessing to be shut up here in hospital, I wasn't ill; now I want all my energies, I'm chained by the leg. I'd give up bothering about the thing, but I'm sure I read it somewhere, and I'm sure, too, I recollected once where it was; and it was while I was so bad," he said, pulling out his tattered memorandum-book, and referring to the hieroglyphics it contained. "No," he said, after a long inspection; "I have read a good deal, and taken some copy in my time, but I never thought I should live to write stuff I couldn't read myself. There, it's of no use; it'll come some day."

He closed his eyes, and leaned his head upon his hand; for his brain seemed weary and restless with his long and painful illness.

A morning or two after, the old man was again seated at his bedside, trying to amuse himself with a book; but with little success, for his eyes were weak.

"I shall let well alone," growled the old man; "and if they want to operate, they may cut and carve some one else. I shall do, for the few years I have to live; but they might find a poor fellow a scrap of snuff, hang 'em!"

"Here, you No. 19—into bed with you directly!"

"Why, I'm only just up," grumbled Matt, who was the said number.

"Never mind, old fellow," said the speaker; "be smart, for they will be after you directly."

Old Matt shivered and trembled, and his lips moved as he slowly returned to his bed, and there lay waiting. He had almost determined to be content, and bear his burden to the grave; for, said he, "I can't live much longer." But then he thought of the wondrous skill and care of those in whose hands he would be, and of the rest that would afterwards be his were his life spared.

"I won't turn coward now," he muttered, letting his eyes rest upon some flowers in a window near his bed, and gazing at them in a strange, earnest way. "No, I won't turn coward, even if they kill me. But that's hard to think of, that is. Mine has been a hard life, and I've put up with a deal; but I never tired of it—not to say thoroughly tired of it, though I've been very near more than once; and I should like to keep grinding on for a long time yet. Life's sweet, somehow, when you've got friends; and I seem to have found 'em at last. I should have liked to help him out with that entry, though. Where did I see it?"

The old man paused thoughtfully, and kept passing his hand across his dew-wet forehead; but the memory was still defective, and he sighed wearily—

"Why didn't I begin sooner, or make him begin? Ah, that's it—that's it! Why don't we begin hundreds of things sooner, and not leave them till it's too late!"

The old man paused again, and his lean, bony fingers clutched and clawed restlessly to get at the flowers. But his old train of thought now seemed to have returned; for he continued—

"Don't often see anything about hospital operations, but I have had copy about them—'Death from the Administration of Chloroform.' What an ugly word that first is, and what a shiver it seems to give one when we think of it in connection with ourselves, though it seems so little when it has to do with any one else! Wonder whether any of the old 'stab. or piece hands would get hold of it to set, and feel sorry for the battered old stamp they used to laugh at; and whether it would get into the papers if I was to—"

The old man stopped once more, and wiped the dew from his wet forehead.

"Well, well," he said half-aloud, "what is to be will be! God help me well through it all, for I'm a miserable coward; and if it's to be the end of old Matt, why, I don't think I've been so very bad, and—there, hang it!" he whined, "they might have left me a pinch of snuff. Here, I say, though," he cried, rousing up, "this won't do. I'm on the wrong folio, and shall have to re-set.

"I wonder whether it's hard to die?" he muttered, after another pause. "Don't seem as if it was, for they look almost as if they were asleep, and wanting to be woke up again. One must go some time or another; but it would have been happier like to have had hold of some one's hand, and seen two or three faces round one's bed, faces of people sorry I was going—going. There, there," he gasped, "I can't stand it. They sha'n't touch me. It's like running headlong into one's grave. They sha'n't touch me, for I must live and find out about the doctor, for that poor helpless fellow in the Rents; or he'll never do it himself. They sha'n't touch me, for I am nearly clear now, and I can grub on as I am; while if my chronics kill me in time, why they do, and there's an end of it. They sha'n't—"

"Now, No. 19," said a voice; and to his dismay poor old Matt saw a couple of porters enter the ward with a stretcher.

The old man moaned, and closed his eyes, muttering the whole while, as he resigned himself, meekly as a child, and without a word of opposition, to the men, who tenderly lifted him upon their portable couch, and then bore him along the white-washed passages, whose walls seemed so familiar to him, and struck him as being so particularly white and clean—white as were ceiling and floor. He only saw one cobweb, and that was out of reach in a far corner; and in his nervous state this greatly attracted his attention, so that he could fancy the large spider grinned at him as if he were a larger kind of fly in the trammels of a net. He felt that he should have liked for the men to set down the stretcher and remove that cobweb, but he stifled the desire to speak. Then he noticed how strangely the hair of his foremost bearer grew, and this, too, troubled him: there were no short hairs on the poll, and for some distance up the back of his neck was a barren land. Then he fell to studying the man's coat-buttons, the depth of his collar, and how easily he tramped along with the handles of the portable

couch, whose motion was so easy with the light, regular, springy pace of the man; while the dread of what was impending seemed quite to have passed away, and he began, now the peril was so near, to think of himself as though he were some one else in whom he took an interest; and then came a very important question—

How would they bring him back?

Would he be lighter with the loss of blood, and would he be gradually stiffening, and growing colder and colder, till the icy temperature of death pervaded him through and through? And then, too, what would they do with him? He had no relations—no one to come and claim his body. And even this thought seemed to trouble him but little, for he smiled grimly, muttering to himself—

"Cause of science, sir—cause of science; and besides, it won't matter then."

On still, with a light swinging motion and an easy tread, the porters bore their load; and in the minute or two the removal occupied, old Matt thought of the last time he had made that journey, and his sensations then: how that he had looked upon it all as a dream, and felt that he should soon wake up to find himself in bed. But the old man's musings ceased as he was borne into the theatre, save for an instant when the thought flashed across his mind—suppose he died without seeing the entry?—and this troubled him for a few moments; but directly after he was gazing up with anxious eye at the tier upon tier of benches, some crowded, some nearly empty, and looking from face to face; but there seemed not one that sympathized with him, as, after a glance when he was borne in, a quiet, light, chatty conversation was carried on in an undertone. Then there was almost perfect silence, and the old man felt himself to be the centre upon which every eye was fixed. His heart told him now that, in the low murmured buzz of conversation that rose, students who had again and again stood at his bedside were discussing his case; and that if the operation were unsuccessful or unskillfully performed, they would merely say that the patient did not rally, and then go home or to their studies, regardless of the little gap left in the ranks of life; while Septimus Hardon would probably never succeed in his endeavours to recover his lost position.

Then he half smiled as he thought of the importance with which he rated himself, and looked eagerly round. Close by he could see the earnest, studious faces of several older men, many of them grey-haired and thoughtful-eyed—men of eminence in their profession, but strongly imbued with the belief of the man of wisdom, that we are ever but learners. Then he looked straight above, even at the skylight, where he could see that the sun illumined the thick ground-glass. And now once more, in a quiet, musing vein, he set to wondering how it would be after the operation.

Plenty of faces round, but mostly cool, calm, and matter-of-fact. Here were the hospital dressers and assistants, standing by the table—a curious-looking table in the centre of an open space; and a hasty glance showed him sponges, and water, and cloths, and lint, and mahogany cases, that at another time, if some other sufferer were to have been operated

upon, would have caused him to shudder. But all that was past now; and he merely looked earnestly round, till his gaze rested upon a stout, grey-haired, keen-eyed man, whose black clothes and white neck-tie were spotless, and who now advanced to the table with a quiet, business-like aspect, as he bowed somewhat stiffly to the assembled surgeons and students, and then spoke a few cheering words to the patient, as he felt his pulse.

"I hope he won't turn nervous over it," thought Matt. "Be serious to a man in his position, with so many looking on. Can't I have the chloroform?" he then whispered to a dresser by his side.

"Yes, of course—here he is with it," said the man.

And, for the second time in his life, Matt gazed curiously at a polished mahogany box which was being brought forward.

"I say," whispered Matt earnestly to the man at his side, "if any one comes afterwards—afterwards, you know—and asks for me, you'll say, 'Medicine and attendance.' There, don't laugh—it's particular. You'll say, 'Medicine and attendance,' and that old Matt tried to think it out to the last. You'll do that for me?" he whispered, earnestly.

The man repeated the words over, and smiled as he made the required promise.

"Tell him not to give me too much," said Matt, now with the first display of anxiety, as he glanced at the inhaling apparatus.

The time since old Matt had been brought into the theatre might be reckoned by moments; and now, in the midst of a profound stillness, the grey-haired man calmly raised his eyebrows, turned up his sleeves, and then walked a step or two from the patient, now inhaling the wondrous vapour of that simple-looking limpid fluid, whose first effect was to cause him to push away the apparatus and struggle feebly with those who administered it. But there was a strong hand upon his pulse, and a pair of stern eyes watching him, and, as the mouthpiece was kept firmly against his face, old Matt gave one or two more inspirations and became insensible. Then every eye was fixed upon the calm, business-like man, whose nerves seemed of kindred material to the blades he drew from their delicate purple-velvet resting-places and quietly inspected for an instant, his eyes flashing brightly as their grey-hued blades—knives whose keen edges were formed of the finest-tempered metal that human skill and ingenuity could produce.

A breathless silence ensued, and the gay, thoughtless aspect was gone from the young faces crowding the benches. Here and there an assumed cynical smile could be seen, but the effects of a strange clutching at the heart, a curious vibration of the nerves, was visible in the pallor of cheeks and fevered aspect of the onlookers of the upper seats. Two young men right at the back surreptitiously drank from small flasks, and when wiping their lips paused, too, to pass their handkerchiefs over their damp foreheads, before thrusting them in their moist palms, as the great surgeon—one who had climbed by slow degrees to his present eminence in the profession, and upon whose knowledge and skill now depended the life of a fellow-creature—gave his quick, sharp orders, and changed the position of one or two assistants at the operating table,

pointing, like a general preparing for battle, with the keen blade he held in his hand. Short, quick orders, as he grasped the flashing steel and made ready for the fight—for the *combat à l'outrance*, with the grim, slow-crawling, dragon disease—a fight where skill and genius took the place of physical force and daring.

A painful silence, and then, while every eye was fixed upon his movements, the great surgeon gave a hasty glance round, to see that all was in readiness for the time when moments were more than grains of gold, and would add their weight in one scale of the balance—life or death; but all seemed there, ready hands and the many appliances for checking the rapid flow of life's stream, and then, with almost an air of nonchalance, he stretched out his arms to secure freedom of action.

Not a whisper, not a movement—the spectators of the scene with craning necks, immovable as groups of statuary, as they gazed from their tiers of benches in this modern amphitheatre down upon the gladiatorial combat taking place, even as of old the Roman citizens may have watched some fight for life or death.

A keen, bright flash of the blade in the softened light, and the surgeon thoughtfully describing an imaginary curve in the air with the point just above the insensible patient. Then, with a satisfied nod, he leaned forward. There was once more a bright flash of the knife, followed by a bold, firmly-directed cut, deep and long, but clear of vital parts in the wondrous organization. Then came the spouting gush from many a vessel, as the old man's life-blood rushed from its maze; busy fingers at work, here upon arteries to stay their waste, there applying sponge; one blade changed for another, more manipulation, and orders performed after being given in a calm, impressive whisper; a few more busy moments, and the throbbing flow of life arrested; rapidly moving fingers with sponges, silk, strapping, towels.

The great surgeon softly wiped his hands, cool, calm, and unruffled.

"Very little loss, Mr. Grant"—to the next general in command.

"Extremely little," with a bow and a smile—"most successful operation."

"Well, well, I think so," said the great man, unbending somewhat, as he arranged his cuffs, and brushed off an imaginary speck of dust.

He then felt the patient's pulse for a few moments, nodded with a satisfied air, said a few words to the chief of his staff, bowed once more; and by the time the hospital dressers had finished their task, and the patient was lifted back upon his portable couch, the operator was in the brougham waiting in the street.

Then came once more the murmuring buzz of voices, the reaction and the pallor tried to belauded down, the porters, and then in a few minutes old Matt was once more in his bed, and comfortably arranged, before he recovered consciousness.

The house-surgeon and an assistant were beside his bed as he opened his eyes and stared vacantly about, trying to recall what had taken place.

"How sick and faint—what a nasty dream!" he

muttered. "But I don't know, sir—been as well if it had been true."

"What would?" said the surgeon, smiling.

"Why, I dreamed, sir, that—why, so it was, then," muttered the old man, fervently; "thank God, thank God!"

A calm, heavy sleep soon fell upon Matt; but he was not free from trouble then. There was the entry continually worrying him; now he knew he had seen it, now he felt that it was only a dream, or a dream within a dream. At last, though, a change came over the scene, and all was prosperity; he had entered into partnership with Septimus Hardon, and purchased the copyright of the *Times*, whose columns they regularly filled every day with a complete exposure of Doctor Hardon.

But the dream was not founded upon fact, for Septimus Hardon, with hope in his breast, had been to the entrance of the hospital, thinking that now Matt was so much better he would perhaps be ready with some information. But the visitor had been told of the operation, and the old man's present critical state, while being advised not to see him at that visit; and, receiving a promise that a message should be sent in the event of a change for the worse, Septimus Hardon slowly, and sadly disheartened, returned to his law-copying.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—THE BREAKING OF A BARRIER.

IT was about this time that Aunt Fanny, in the large room at Surrey-street, took to complaining of her neck, and wore a narrow strip of flannel beneath the stiff white muslin kerchief, while, night and morn, her servant had to rub the said neck with hartshorn and oil. And truly the old dame's neck was stiff, and cold might have had some share in producing the stiffness; but undoubtedly it was principally caused by the many sage shakes she gave her head when pondering over her nephew's state; for in spite of all the medicaments which he patiently allowed her to administer, the old lady effected no cure, and was in consequence sorely troubled in her own mind.

But she was not so sorely troubled as the object of her interest, who angered himself in vain because of the chaotic state of his mind. Battle, battle—ever the same useless struggle, till he was ashamed of his weakness and want of self-control. To-day victor, to-morrow vanquished; now reviling himself for his want of faith and cruel suspicions, which he owned were almost baseless; the next day a slave to duty, and forbidding his heart to harbour further thoughts of her he now called his enemy. Work seemed the only refuge, and he toiled on. Study he could not; but he visited from house to house in the fold of Bennett's-rents, where the tainted sheep of his flock were gathered; and hiding from himself his real feelings—a shallow pretence—he knew the while how anxious he was respecting that little ewe-lamb.

But he drew a mask over his face, telling himself it was his true countenance; and, with a calmness that was but on the surface, he called frequently to see the invalid mother, timing, however, his visits that they might be made while Lucy was absent—for duty's sake (and he now knew pretty well when

she was likely to visit the warehouse); while, when he had visited the Rents, and returned without seeing her, he credited duty largely, and praised his own self-denial—all steps, he flattered himself, towards the final conquest which he would achieve. But, though casting out the weak thoughts, he told himself that it was his duty to satisfy his heart concerning the doubts which so constantly tormented him.

How often the hours came when he scorned his dissimulation, and tore off the mask, none knew; but his face grew more pale and livid, and the grey hairs that sprinkled his temples were thicker than of old.

It happened one day, though, when he and Lucy had not encountered since he saw her bending over the child from Mrs. Jarker's room, that, visiting from house to house and room to room, Mr. Sterne stood in front of Mrs. Sims's; but that lady was from home; so, hearing the merry voice of the laughing child, he had ascended the stairs, to find Lucy in the birdcatcher's attic. For the little face had been pressed against the blackened window, and a pair of bright little eyes had peered, hour after hour, from beneath the tangled golden hair, watching the busy fingers at the sewing machine, till, with heart aching for the neglected babe, and to study her mother, who objected to its being brought into the room, Lucy had crossed the court, and gone up and played with the little thing, laughing merrily at the child's delight, though a tear stood in her eye more than once as she evaded the child's eager, oft-repeated question of "When mammy come back?" Bill had gone out with his nets, and most probably would not be back until night; so the child had been left alone with some food in the dreary room, to play or cry itself to sleep, unless Mrs. Sims should be there to attend to its wants. But there was that one spot by the window where she could look down upon Lucy; and there, day after day, she would stand without murmuring, attracted by that wondrous sense which draws children to the loveable and true. Lucy's heart yearned as she gazed up from time to time at the child, and she longed earnestly for the season when its mother should make fresh arrangements; but for some reason she came not, and Lucy had not seen her since Mrs. Jarker's death.

And now the golden hours for which the little soul had longed had come again. Lucy was with her, and, herself a child for the time, she laughed merrily at the little one's delight.

Panting, tumbled, and flushed with exercise, Lucy stood at last, returning an escaped curl to its bondage, a bright smile playing round her ruddy lips, which parted to display the white teeth beneath, when the door opened, and, with a frown upon his brow, the curate stood in the entrance, gazing upon the scene before him.

"In that ruffian's room—there, of all places in the world!" doubt whispered to him. At a time, too, when their chance meetings had been attended by a cold reserve on Lucy's part—a reserve which his doubting heart misinterpreted; for he could not in his blindness see the cost at which it was maintained. And yet this reserve had pleased him while it pained;

for he at times acknowledged the interest he took in her welfare. But it mattered not, he said, for his desire was but to try and save her from evil, nothing more; and the oftener he listened to these delusive whisperings the stronger grew a voice within, telling him that his reasoning was false, and that he was forgetting duty, position—all, in a love for one who grew colder and more distant at every meeting. Wearily, though, he kept on building up a wall between them—a wall built upon the sand. Stone by stone he laid, telling himself that it was for duty's sake, as he toiled on helplessly at his self-imposed task. True, he might have satisfied himself of the motive for Lucy's actions, which to him wore a blurred and strange aspect; but to others her name seemed a sealed book, one which he shrank from opening, lest he should at the same time reveal the secret of his own heart.

And now he stood at the door of that beggarly room, where was the bed over which he had so lately bent to whisper comfort to the suffering woman, or knelt by its side to ask mercy for the poor sufferer and a blessing on the helpless child. There was the same bare look of misery in the wretched place; but as the sun streamed through the great leaden lattice, all seemed glorified and brightened by the presence there. Unseen he gazed on, while the glow of orange light flooded the room, and played round the graceful form of Lucy, as, starting again, she was pursued by the laughing child, varying her attitude each moment as she eluded its grasp.

Suddenly the child struck itself sharply against a chair, and broke into a whimpering cry; but the caressing arms, the words of endearment, and the loving kiss soothed the pain instantly, and a smile came over the sunny face once more; when Lucy stood as if transfixed, the merry light faded from her eyes, the smile from her lip, and then the blood flushed to her temples; but only to retreat and leave her deadly pale, for in an instant the wall so laboriously built up, and at so great a cost in suffering, was swept down by the flood of passion. Arthur Sterne knew that the battle had been in vain, and that he was but man; while doubt, everything was cast to the winds as he was by her side, her hands clasped in his, telling her of his beaten-down love, his hopes, his fears,—all, all in the impassioned burst of words raised by the tempest of a strong man's love; for the sandy foundation was undermined, and the last trace of the barrier swept away.

And what said she? No words came in reply to his appeal. At first, startled, confused, overcome, she shrank from him, pale and trembling; but as his words came pouring forth, making cheek and neck burn, she knew that no greater bliss could be hers; and the trembling lids of her dark-blue eyes were slowly lifted to meet his, when, as if scathing her once more, came the recollection of his bitter, contemptuous look, his long coldness, and even scorn; and, snatching away her hands, she burst into tears and darted from the room.

Pale and troubled in mind as to what to attribute Lucy's behaviour, his brain in a whirl of doubt, Arthur Sterne stood gazing at the door, until, turning, he became aware that the opposite attic window was being opened. The lark began to twitter as

the hand of Jean Marais secured it outside; and then he saw the wild dark eyes of the youth begin to earnestly watch the room.

Turning with a few kind words to the astonished child, who crouched in a corner, Arthur Sterne made his way from the house; and a sad evening spent Aunt Fanny, in her anxiety for the "wilful boy," who angrily rejected her advice. He was not ill, he said; but the good dame nipped her lips together; while, retiring at last, the curate spent the night pacing his chamber floor, trying to examine the tangle in his heart; but only to conclude that, come what might, difference of position should be no bar between him and Lucy; for driving away, as he thought, successfully the doubt that still assailed him, he declared to himself that she possessed virtues before which birth and dowry paled and became as naught.

"Unstable as water," muttered the curate to himself, though, days after, when, meeting Lucy alone in the front room of their place in Bennett's-rents, the barrier was again broken down—the barrier that time had forced him to renew—while the words he could not but utter came pouring forth, to bring no response.

Septimus was away with his boy, and Mrs. Hardon slept in the back room; and the words of Arthur Sterne were low and deep as the passion that prompted them. But there was no response—no loving look in reply—naught but the pale cheek and quivering eyelid, tears and looks of half-anger. For still clung to Lucy the recollection of his scorn and contempt, his misinterpretation of her motives; and the hands he clasped were cold, and drawn away.

Then anger took the place of love—a foolish, mad anger, which robbed him of his self-control, and made him utter words beneath whose passion the poor girl bent as bends flower before the storm. He uttered words then that an hour after he would have given anything to recall; telling her angrily of *ma mère*, and her slighting hints of Jarker's familiarity, and lastly of the meeting he had witnessed in the Lane—unheeding the hands held up so deprecatingly, the appealing looks, and the tear-wet, pallid cheeks; for, as he told himself again and again that night, he was mad—mad in his passionate love for one unworthy—mad in his words; and he writhed as he recalled the way in which he felt that he had lowered himself.

"I insist—I hold it as a right!" he had exclaimed; "tell me, Lucy, who was that woman? Do you know her character?"

And he clutched her wrist angrily as he spoke.

He said no more then, for Lucy's face was aflame, and she started hastily to her feet, facing him almost as it were at bay, and vainly trying to free her hand from his grasp.

"Do your parents know of your meetings?" he exclaimed.

"No, no, no!" she cried, excitedly, as she glanced towards the back room door.

"Then I must—nay," he added, with almost a cowardly look of triumph, for the weakness of the man was triumphant that afternoon, and he yielded

to all that he had hitherto triumphed over—"I will tell them," he said, "for your good."

"For pity's sake," whispered Lucy, "Mr. Sterne. Ah, pray, sir, stop—pray stay! Do not think ill of me—"

But there Lucy ceased, for she was alone; and once more scornfully, with the cold, bitter look, Mr. Sterne had dashed her hand from him in contempt, and turned from the room, into which Mrs. Hardon now came to find Lucy weeping as though her heart would break.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—SNUFF.

OLD Matt did not wake again for many hours, but, as the days slipped by, he partook with avidity of all that was allowed him, and grumbled for more. His friend the house-surgeon, whom he could look at now without imagining that he took notes inimical to his friend Septimus Hardon's interest, reported favourably of his condition; while Septimus himself came again and again, each time more eager to get at that which was hidden by the confusion in old Matt's brain.

"If he had only been so jolly anxious about the Somesham affair, first start off, what a difference it would have made!" grumbled Matt.

But it seemed useless to try and draw the old man's attention to things he had talked of in the days shortly before his entry into the hospital, for here all seemed blank.

"Well, yes, sir," Matt would say, "I have some faint recollection of saying something about medicine and attendance; but do you know, sir, I begin to think that one's memory is in one's blood; and they took so much out of me that last time, that I can't remember anything at all. 'Medicine and attendance,' did I say? Why, it must have been the medicine and attendance here, and those old cats of nurses. My thinking apparatus is terribly out of order, sir; and when I try to look back at anything, it's like peeping at it through a dirty window. P'raps it won't come bright and clean again, eh?"

"Don't try to think," said Septimus, with a sigh. "You will recollect some day; so let it rest."

"Well, sir, that's just what I should like to do; but since you've asked me, I can't; for things won't go just as I like, and I feel all in a muddle. Let's see, now: you said something about this at your last visit, didn't you, sir? when I asked you about that talking woman and the office for servants; for I do recollect that, you know."

"Yes," replied Septimus, "at every visit."

"Just so," said Matt; "I thought you did; but I can't tell a bit about it now. Sometimes it seems that I heard it; sometimes that I read it, or saw it against a wall, or dancing before my eyes; but let's see," he said vacantly, as he held his hand to his head, "what was it we wanted to find?"

"The doctor's books, or the doctor," said Septimus.

"To be sure," said the old man; "I hav'n't got it right yet; and really you know, sir, this isn't a first-class place to get right in, and they won't part with me yet; though I do long now to be well, and at liberty for a peep at the old law courts and Lincoln's-inn once more. I mean to have a holiday, and spend it

among all the posts in the old square as soon as I'm out; I'm getting so light-hearted and jolly, sir. Why, it will be quite a treat to be somewhere amongst a bit or two of dirt once more—we're so clean here."

"Only a little longer, Matt," said Septimus, smiling.

"You see," said Matt, "there's so much to upset one about; what with the screen round that bed, and the groans and sighs, ah, and even shouts sometimes, there's plenty to make a poor fellow feel low-spirited. Now there's a chap over there in that bed seems to have taken it into his head that he suffers more than any one who ever came into the place, and howls and goes on terribly; while the bigger and stronger people are, sir, the more weak they seem to me to be in bearing pain. I believe, after all, you know, sir, that the little weak women beat us hollow."

"Ah!" said the patient spoken of, surmising from Matt's gestures that he was being referred to—"ah! Mr. Space, you are talking about me, sir, and my groans, and it's very hard and unfeeling, sir. You may suffer yourself some day."

The visitor felt uncomfortable; but old Matt took it up directly.

"That's cool, anyhow," he gasped. "Why, what do you mean? Haven't I suffered as much as any of you, and been through two operations, and lived 'em out, too? Why, what more would you have? It would have killed a big fellow like you, I know."

The patient replied with a groan, and began muttering about the unfeeling behaviour of those about him, from whom, he said, he had expected a little sympathy.

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CHAPTER XII.—IN BESSY'S CABIN.



HOWEVER, so determined was Captain Studwick not to be lightly trifled with, that a pistol was in his hand as he ran back to the side; but his alarm was unnecessary, for the scuffling noise was caused merely by Mr. Parkley catching their visitor as she tottered and nearly fell on the deck.

"Let me see my husband, Mr. Parkley," she moaned, "for pity's sake let me see my husband. If I saw him and spoke to him, he would listen to me."

"But my dear child," began Mr. Parkley.

"I shall die if I do not see him," she moaned again. "I have been so ill—I have suffered so much; and this evening the news came that he was going away—away without seeing me. Oh, God, what have I done that I should suffer so!"

"My dear child, my dear Mrs. Pugh."

"I must see him—pray, pray take me to him," she sobbed, "it's more than I can—more than I can bear."

Mr. Parkley caught her again just in time, for she swooned away; and, laying her upon the deck, he tried hard to restore her. Then, looking up, he became aware that the lights of the town were fast receding.

"Why, Studwick," he exclaimed, "the schooner's moving!"

"Yes," said the captain.

"But the boat this poor girl came off in?"

"Ashore by this time."

"But we can't take her. Hang it, man! we can-

not have domestic differences on board. She must go back."

"We must now land her at Plymouth," said the captain. "Send for my Bessy, man, she will soon bring her to. How foolish of the little woman to come aboard!"

"Shall I fetch the young lady, sir?" said Sam Oakum, gruffly, as he stood with a look of disgust upon his face.

"Yes, for goodness' sake, do. Quick!" exclaimed Mr. Parkley, whose efforts to restore animation were all in vain.

Just as Sam went aft, though, Mrs. Pugh began to revive, stared wildly about, and sitting up saw the captain bending over her.

"Captain Studwick," she cried, catching his hand and drawing herself upon her knees to cling to him, "don't send me back—don't send me away. Let me go too. I could not bear to part from my husband like this. He is angry with me," she whispered; "I cannot tell you why, but he has not spoken to me for days, and I have been so—so ill."

"Yes, yes, you shall see him, my dear, but stand up. You must not make a scene."

"Oh, no," she exclaimed, rising hastily, "I will do anything you say, only let me see him and explain. Let me go with you. If I could talk to him he would believe me, and all would be well again. If not," she said, with a hysterical cry, "I shall go mad—I shall go mad."

"Come, let me take you below," said the captain; for she was clinging tightly to his arm.

"Yes, yes," whispered the poor, trembling woman. "I could not help that; I am trying so hard to be calm, but my poor breast is so care-laden that a cry would escape. Let me go with you, Captain Studwick. I will be so quiet—so careful."

"It is impossible, my dear child," he said, in a husky voice; for her agony affected him.

"No, no, don't say that; I will help Bessy nurse your poor son. She loves me, and believes in me; and I will give no trouble. If you set me ashore I shall die of grief. I cannot live to be separated from my husband—for him to leave me like this."

"Well, well, well, I'll see what I can do," said the captain, in the quieting way that one would speak to a child.

But she peered instantly into his face.

"You are deceiving me!" she cried. "You are trying to calm me with promises, and you mean to set me ashore. Mr. Parkley," she wailed, turning to him, "you know me, and believe in me: you know the cause of this trouble. Take me to my dear husband, and help me to drive away this horrible belief of his, or I shall die."

"My dear child—my dear child," he said, drawing her to him, "I will try all I can."

"But you will set me ashore again, when I strove so hard to get to him. I was so ill in bed, and he has not been near me. I found out that you were taking Dutch from me, and I could not stay. Let me see him—oh, let me see him!"

"You shall, my dear, as soon as you are calm."

"But he is here," she whispered, not daring to raise her voice, lest, in her excited state, it should get the mastery over her, and she should burst forth in hysterical wails.

"Yes, my child, he is here. He is asleep below."

"Poor Dutch!" she whispered to herself, and then, with a faint weary smile, she laid her hands in those of her old friend. "There, you will see how calm and patient I will be," she continued. "No one shall suspect any trouble. I will be so quiet and patient, and if he will not listen to me, I will not complain, so long as I am near him, only wait till God changes his heart towards me."

"There, then, you shall stay—till we get to Plymouth," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, hastily passing his hand across his eyes. "Don't let the men see that anything's the matter, my dear."

"No, oh, no," she replied. "I'm quite calm now. Ah, here's Miss Studwick."

"You here, Mrs. Pugh!" exclaimed the captain's daughter, who believed that she was coming to her father.

"Yes, I could not stay," sobbed Hester. "I was obliged to come. Oh, Bessy, dear Bessy, don't shrink from me!" she wailed, as the men gladly drew away and left them together.

"Hush! don't speak here," said Bessy, glancing round, and speaking hoarsely—"come down to my cabin."

Hester tottered, and would have fallen, but Bessy caught her arm and led her below, where, as soon as they were alone, the former fell upon her knees, and held up her hands, catching those of Bessy as she stood before her.

"Listen to me, Miss Studwick," she moaned. "Don't condemn me unheard. I thought you believed in me, but you shrank from me just now."

Bessy did not speak, but gazed down on the sobbing woman with a look of pity.

"My dear husband has allowed cruel suspicions to creep into his heart, and he wrongs me—he does, indeed. Oh, Bessy, Bessy, you loved him once, I know—I know you did; and you must have hated me for taking his love from you."

A low sigh burst from Bessy's breast, but she did not speak.

"You know," sobbed Hester, "how true, and noble, and frank he is."

"I do," said Bessy, softly.

"Then, what would the woman be who could betray him, even in thought? Would she not be the vilest, the most cruel of wretches?"

"She would, indeed," said Bessy, coldly.

"Bessy—Miss Studwick," cried Hester, with a low wail of misery, "if I have committed any sin, it is that of loving my dear husband too well. God—God knows how innocent I am. Oh! it is too hard to bear."

She sank lower on the cabin floor, weeping silently, but only by a great effort, for the heavy

sobs kept rising to her lips; and in her agony the intense desire to obtain relief in uttering loud cries was almost more than she could master.

Bessy stood looking down upon her, with brows knit and lips pressed together; for her heart whispered to her that this was a judgment on this woman, who had robbed her of her love, and that she ought to rejoice over her downfall. Then, too, the thought came that, this idol fallen, she might, perhaps, herself be raised up in its place, and a flash of joy irradiated her mind; but only for a moment. Then her better nature prevailed; and, stooping down, she lifted the prostrate woman with ease, and laid her upon the couch-like locker that filled one side of the cabin, kneeling down beside her, and drawing the dishevelled head upon her bosom.

"Hester," she whispered, "I did hate you, very, very bitterly—as intensely as I once loved Dutch Pugh; but all that is passed. When I came to your house, and began to know you better, I used to go home, and kneel down and pray for his happiness with you; while, when I heard of his trouble, my hatred began to fight its way back, so that the last day or two I have felt ready to curse you for the wreck you have made."

"Oh, no, no, no!" sobbed Hester, clinging to her; "I am innocent."

"Yes, I know and believe that now," said Bessy; "and I will help you to win him back to the same belief."

"But you will bring him to me quickly, or they will set me ashore," wailed Hester, clinging tightly to her companion as she uttered a cry of relief. "If I could but stay only to see him sometimes, and know that he was safe, I should wait then patiently until he came to me and told me that all this troublous dream was at an end."

"And you believe that he will do this?"

"Believe!" cried Hester, starting up, and gazing full at her companion. "Oh, yes, I believe it. It may be long first, but the time will come, and I can wait—I can wait—I can wait."

She sank back quite exhausted, as she repeated the last words again and again in a whisper, the last time almost inaudibly; and then, holding Bessy Studwick's hand tightly clasped to her bosom, her eyes closed, and she sank into the deep sleep of exhaustion, the first sleep that had visited the weary woman for three nights, while as the light from the cabin lamp fell athwart her pretty troubled face, Bessy knelt there watching her, passing her soft white hand across the forehead to sweep away the tangled locks. Then, as the time wore on, and the rippling, splashing noise of the water against the ship grew louder, and the footsteps on the deck grew less frequent, she listened for the catching sighs that escaped at intervals from the young wife's lips, her own tears stealing gently down from time to time, as Hester murmured more than once the name which she had herself loved to dream.

"Poor Dutch! and he might have felt the same trouble perhaps about me," thought Bessy, as she bent over and kissed Hester's cheek, to feel the sleeping woman's arms steal round her neck for a moment, and then glide softly down again.

"No, no—it could not be true," she whispered

again, as she knelt there watching hour after hour for Hester to awake, till her own head sank lower and lower, and at last she fell asleep by the suffering woman's side.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE DOCTOR'S DECREE.

AS the morning broke bright and clear, the large three-masted schooner was running down the Channel under easy sail, and the men were beginning to fall into their places, though all was at present rather awkward and strange. Captain Studwick and Mr. Parkley had gone below, congratulating themselves on having succeeded so far, and placed themselves out of the reach of Lauré's machinations; while Mr. Jones, the mate, had taken charge, and was now pacing the deck in company with Dutch, who was trying hard to master his pain, by throwing his whole soul into the adventure.

In spite of himself, though, a little suffering face constantly presented itself before him; and again and again he found his conscience smiting him, and charging him with cruelty in forsaking her—asking him, too, if he was sure that his suspicions were just?

At such times he recalled the shadows on the blind, set his teeth, and thought of Lauré's sneering laugh of triumph; and then his blood seemed to boil up, and it was only by a strong effort that he was able to master the agony he felt, mingled as it was with a desire for revenge.

"If I don't get to work at something," he muttered, "I shall go mad."

Just then the sun rose bright and clear, sending a flood of wondrous brilliancy over the dancing waters, flecking the distant land with golden radiance and dark shadows, while the soft mists gradually rose higher and higher, gleaming like transparent silver, as they floated over woodland and down.

"I wonder whether I shall ever see you again," muttered Dutch to himself, as he leaned over the bulwark, and gazed at the beautiful panorama by which they were swiftly gliding.

And then, turning away with a sigh, he came full upon the dark-skinned mulatto sailor, busily coiling down a rope; and Dutch started slightly, half feeling that he had seen the lowering countenance before; but the man paid no heed to him, but went on with his task with his tarry hands, and finally went off limping to another part of the deck.

Just then Captain Studwick and Mr. Parkley came on deck, talking earnestly; and when he went forward to shake hands, they looked troubled, and there was an air of constraint in their manner that he could not understand.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, with an affectation of ease which he did not feel, "we are out of our troubles now."

"I don't know so much about that," said Mr. Parkley. "Eh, Studwick?"

"No," said the captain, "I don't know either."

"Why, what do you mean?" said Dutch; and his eye involuntarily fell upon the dark-skinned sailor, who was close at hand. "You don't suspect that the Cuban can interfere now?"

"You'd better tell him," whispered Mr. Parkley.

"No, no; you tell him," said the captain, uneasily—"known him longer, and so on."

"What are you whispering about?" exclaimed Dutch. "Pray, speak out."

Mr. Parkley looked at the captain for help; but he began to whistle, and walked away to give an order.

"Well, my dear Pugh, the fact is—" said Mr. Parkley, taking hold of his special button.

"Pray go on," exclaimed Dutch; "not anything serious?"

"N—no, not serious, but awkward. The fact is your wife came on board last night."

"My wife!" exclaimed Dutch, and a flash of joy lit up his face. Then the sombre cloud overshadowed it again, and he exclaimed bitterly, "I have no wife!" and walked away.

"Well, my lad," said Captain Studwick, sharply—for the mulatto had ceased working, and, half bent down as he was, stood listening intently to all that passed—"you've nothing to do with what those gentlemen are saying."

The man made a deprecating motion with his hand, and bent to his work again.

"We may as well understand each other at once," said the captain, sharply. "Stand up."

The mulatto stood up, but in a half-averted way, and displayed a curious sinister expression, caused by what appeared to be a scar across his cheek, while his eye seemed shifty and unable to meet the speaker's gaze.

"What is your name?"

"Tonio," said the mulatto.

"Well, Tonio, mind this: You are engaged here for good pay. I always see that my men are well supplied in their mess, and, in return, I expect smart work and strict obedience. Do you understand?"

"Yes, captain," said the man, in a tone half sulky, half full of humiliation.

"That will do. Now go and help that fellow to take a pull at the jib."

The man went limping off, but with great alacrity, passing Dutch, who came back looking very stern and angry.

"Captain Studwick, I must ask you to put in at Plymouth. Mr. Parkley, she must be set ashore."

"But, my dear boy, had you not better see her first? I'm—I'm afraid she will object to go without."

"No," said Dutch, sternly; and he gazed at both in turn. "She must be set ashore as soon as possible."

Captain Studwick walked forward again, whistling, and then pulling out his glass he took a look at a fast steamer astern.

"Parkley," said Dutch, as soon as they were alone, "I could not say it before him, but I have not the manly strength to see her. I am weak as water, and I could not bear to see her agony. Tell her," he added, with his lower lip working, "that I forgive her, and will pray for her, but I can never see her again."

"But, my dear Pugh, you must—"

"Good morning, gentlemen," said a voice that made them start; and turning sharply round, it was

to find Mr. Meldon, the young doctor. "Wanted to see you, Mr. Pugh."

"To see me?"

"About Mrs. Pugh. You know she came on board last night."

"Yes, I know," said Pugh, coldly.

"She must have left her sick bed to come and see you, I suppose. It was a very ill-advised course, for she was ill."

"Yes," exclaimed Dutch, with an eagerness he could not conceal.

"And I am sorry to say that she is now in a high state of fever."

"Fever?"

"Yes; and quite delirious."

"We must put back, then," exclaimed Dutch. "She must be set ashore—taken home."

"I should not like to take the responsibility of having her moved," said the doctor. "If you will take my advice, you will let her remain."

"Let her remain?" gasped Dutch. "Impossible!"

"No," said the doctor, smiling; "the removal is impossible."

"Is she in danger?"

"Not necessarily now; but she would be in great danger if moved. I'm afraid I must ask you to leave her to me. It is fortunate that I was on board, and that she has so good a nurse with her as Miss Studwick."

Dutch essayed to speak, but no words came; and drawing in his breath, as if in intense pain, he walked to the side, and stood with his head resting upon his hand, looking out to sea, and wondering how this tangle was to be ended.

"Poor fellow! he seems a good deal cut up about it," said Mr. Meldon, who was a dark, earnest-looking man of three or four and thirty.

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley. "She was to have gone ashore at Plymouth."

"Ah!" said Meldon. "Poor young thing! Great trouble about parting from her husband."

"Ye-es," said Parkley. Then, to turn the conversation, he said, with a smile, "Lucky thing for us bachelors, Mr. Meldon. We never have to trouble our heads about the women."

"N—no," said the doctor, looking sharply at his companion, with a broad red stain of blood suffusing his cheeks. "Quite a novelty, though—a voyage with ladies on board. He didn't hear me," he continued, as Mr. Parkley obeyed a sign from the captain to come and have a look through his glass at the steamer astern.

"No, sir; he's gone to have a good look at that steamer, as seems as if she meant to overhaul us," said Sam Oakum; "but I heard you, and you're right."

"Let's see, you are the second mate, aren't you, Mr. Oakum?"

"Sir to you, I am," said Oakum.

"But what do you mean by being right?" he said, with a smile.

"'Bout having ladies on board, sir. I know I've been voyages before with women aboard—twice or three times, mayhap—and no good can come of it."

"Ah, you're a croaker, I see," said the doctor, nodding and laughing. "Your liver's out of order."

"Hope I am, sir; and as to my liver, I don't believe I've got one—leastways I can't say as I knows I've one. Ay, ay, sir—coming."

He trotted forward to obey a call from the captain, and more sail was hoisted, the steamer still overhauling them; and both the captain and Mr. Parkley watched her intently, fully expecting to find that this was some new trick of the Cuban, but, to the satisfaction of all concerned, it proved a false alarm, and the schooner continued her way onward towards the west.

It soon became evident, even to the greatest doubter, that the doctor was in the right; and, accepting it as fate that Hester must remain on board, Dutch devoted himself to the preparations for their cruise, rather avoiding the cabins when possible, and dividing his time between reading to the invalid John Studwick, and long talks to old Sam Oakum about the coast and the places where he swore the old plate ships lay.

"Lor' bless you, Mr. Pugh, sir, and you, Mr. Parkley," he said, one day, when Land's End had long been left behind, and all was open water, "I'm as sure of the place as can be. I remember all the bearings too so well. Don't you be skeart about that, I'll take you sure enough."

"Well, Oakum, we are going to trust you," said Mr. Parkley, "and if you lead us to success you shall not go unrewarded."

"I don't want no reward, sir," said the old man, gruffly. "If it turns up trumps, you give me a pound or two o' bacco, and I shall be satisfied."

Mr. Parkley laughed, and after a time left them together, Dutch seeming to find solace in the old sailor's company, as in a grumbling way he began to talk about the state of those on board.

"Seems to me, sir, as it warn't wise to bring that there poor fellow aboard here, just to die and be wrapped in a hammock, for a sailor's funeral; he's allus in your way, and gives a fellow low spirits to see. Look at that steward as the skipper must have, just as if he wanted a steward when we've got Pollo, as is as good a cook as ever came to. Great fat fellow to go walloping down just when I wanted some rope coiled down, and set to blubbering like a great gal because he's left his wife behind."

Dutch winced slightly, and turned away to light a cigar.

"By the way, sir, how's your missus?" said Oakum.

"Better, decidedly," said Dutch, shortly.

"Glad on it, sir. Not as I likes women aboard; but I don't want 'em to be ill. Good job we've got the doctor aboard, to see as everybody takes his salts and senny reg'lar; but what in the world the skipper meant by shipping that great long chap, Mr. Wilson, for, I don't know. He won't go into one o' your soots, Mr. Dutch, I know."

"Oh, no," said Dutch, smiling; "he's a naturalist, and going to collect birds."

"And take 'em out too, sir. He is a long-legged un. Why I see him hit his head twiced up agen the cabin ceiling, and he's allus knocking his hat out o' shape. Nattalist, eh? Well, he's about the unnat-

talist-shaped chap I ever see, and all corners. It's my opinion, sir, as when he was made Natur begun him for a geerarf, and when she'd done his legs altered her mind and turned him into a man."

"You are rather hard on him, Oakum," said Dutch.

"Not I, sir. That's just him; and he's all in a fidget about our voyage. 'Taint a nice time, sir, this first week at sea. To begin with, it takes all that time to shake the longshore games out of the men, so that they're fit to work together. Then, if it happens to blow a bit, as it mostly does in the Channel, there's all the passengers badly, cabin and steerage, with their heads chock full of shipwrecks, and, when they aint skeart about going to the bottom, calling the doctor a brute for not attending on 'em. Sea-sickness is bad enough while it lasts; but people need not be so nation disagreeable about it, and everybody thinks his case ten hundred times worse nor anybody else's. But they will do it. There's that fat chap ill a'ready, and he's been on to the doctor, Mr. Meldon there, for help over and over again. If I'd been the doctor, I'd ha' given Mr. Fatsides such a dose o' daffy as would send Mr. Fatsides to sleep for a week. You don't mind me going on talking, sir?"

"No, Oakum, I like it," said Dutch, though he hardly took in a word.

"Well, sir, as I was a saying, that natallist chap's got a lot of cages full of birds, robins, and sparrers, and starnels, and all sorts, as he says he's going to set free out in South Amerikee, and bring back the cages full of other sorts."

"Naturalists have queer ideas, Oakum," said Dutch, stirring himself. "But about this place we are going to. The sea is always calm, you say?"

"'Cept in stormy times, sir, when, of course, she gets a bit thick. But there, don't you worry about that, we'll take you right to the spot, and lay you just where you can have the long-boat out, with the pumps and traps, or maybe even get the schooner anchored right over the place, and you and Master Rasp there can go down and crowbar the gold and silver out in heaps."

"But suppose some one has been there before us?" said Dutch.

"Not they, sir. First place, no one knows of it 'cept that furren gentlemen; second place, where's the air pumps and divers' togs, to go down and get at it? I get wondering now why I never thought of a trip out there; but I never did. And now, sir, if you'll give me a light I'll have a quiet smoke."

Dutch took out a match-box, and was going to light up, but Oakum held up his hand to enjoin silence; and before the young man could make out what he was about to do, he stepped softly to the side, where a large tarpaulin covered one of the boats lying in its chocks, gave one end of the cover a sharp snatch, and the mulatto started up.

"Now then, out o' that," said the old sailor, menacingly. "If you want a caulk, just you take it below in your bunk."

The man bent his head, as he leaped lightly out, gave Oakum a curious look from beneath his half-closed eyelids, and then limped forward.

"I don't like the looks o' that chap, Mr. Dutch.

He's one o' the sort, that if you hit him, he'd out with a knife and sheath it in a man's ribs. That chap was listening, that's what he was a-doing, though he pretended to be asleep. I don't like the look on him, and if the skipper don't look out there'll be mischief."

"I'm afraid you are given to prophesying evil, Oakum," said Dutch, with a smile.

"Well, sir, I on'y says what I thinks; but mind you this: if we get back safe, I shall be surprised, for never yet, when I've gone out to sea with petticoats on board, have we got back without an accident."

"Nonsense, man."

"'Taint nonsense, sir—it's fate," said Oakum; "and what's more, look here, I ain't a sooperstitious man, but the sperrits o' them sailors as was lost in the olden times along o' the treasure ships aint a-going to let us get hold o' what they've been watching all those hundreds o' years without making a bit of a how de do."

CHAPTER XIV.—THE CAPTAIN'S SUSPICIONS.

THE next day it came on to blow; and for quite a week tempestuous weather set in, the schooner skimming along almost under bare poles, but progressing well on her voyage. Captain Studwick had some trouble with his men; but, on the whole, they were very good sailors, and his strict discipline kept them well to their work, so that, from showing at first a little insubordination, they went pretty willingly to their duties.

On the tenth day out, the sun rose over a sea just rippled by a pleasant breeze. The men were busy drying clothes, and all the ports and hatches were well open; and as the day wore on, Mrs. Pugh, looking very weak and pale, came on deck, leaning on Bessy Studwick's arm, the latter leading her to where Dutch was talking to Mr. Parkley.

Dutch started as he saw them coming up; then, bowing coldly, he walked to the other side of the deck, to where John Studwick was sitting, impatiently watching his sister; and as soon as he saw Mr. Parkley lead Mrs. Pugh to a seat, he called to Bessy impatiently to come to him, keeping her jealously by his side, as he saw Mr. Wilson and the doctor come up and begin walking up and down, and frowning as they both raised their hats, and smiled at his sister.

"I wish you would not notice these men, Bessy!" he exclaimed, in an impatient whisper.

"I only bowed courteously to them, John dear," she said, sadly; "and I will not speak to them if you do not wish it."

"I don't like it," he said, hastily. "Come and read to me."

She glanced across at Hester Pugh, and saw her white lips working as they followed her husband, and then, taking up a book, began to read to him.

"Look at that, Bob," said one of the little group of men, busy overhauling a large sail which had been split during the late gale.

"Yes, he looks bad enough," said another. "A couple more days like we've had would about finish him."

"Get out," said the other; "I don't mean him, I meant the gal."

"Yes, she ain't bad to look at," said the first. "That's her as Oakum was talking about."

"That it warn't," said the other; "'twas the little pale one."

"Just you two get on with that sail, will you?" said a gruff voice behind them; "and leave women passengers alone."

One of the men looked across at the other and grinned, and they went on with their work; while Sam Oakum went grumbling forward.

"I wish they wouldn't have no women aboard," he muttered, half aloud.

"Why not?" said the doctor, who overheard him, and, facing round, Sam found him standing there, with the tall young naturalist, whom the men, with their tendency at sea to nickname every one, had christened Pigeons.

"Why not?" growled Oakum, scowling at old Rasp, between which two a deep dislike had sprung up. "Because though some one here as I won't name will contradict every word I says, they aint no good. They sets the men talking about 'em instead of doing their work; they consooms the stores; they causes the ship to be littered with green stuff and fresh meat; and, what with them and invalids, my deck's always in a mess. Why here's a cow, and chickens, and a goat, and ducks, and Pollo milking every morning to get some thin blue stuff like scupper washings, and the whole place turned into a farm-yard; and all because of the women. Blame 'em! I wish there warn't one on the face of the blessed earth."

"Hear him," said one of the two sailors who had just spoken—"hear him, Bob," for they were dragging the sail aft as Oakum spoke. "He was crossed in love when he was green."

"Women's right enough at times," said Bob, a dull heavy fellow, with a dreadful squint, one of those distortions of the eyes which cause the owner to look behind his nose, which in this case was a very thick one. "I'm right sorry for that little one there, though; for she seems right bad."

"Let me introduce one of our protectors to you, Miss Studwick," said the doctor, stopping by where she sat, book in hand.

John Studwick gave an impatient twist in his chair.

"This is Mr. Oakum, the second mate—a gentleman who is a confirmed hater of your sex."

"No, I arn't," said Sam, gruffly, "I only said as ladies hadn't no business on board ships, even if they is captain's daughters. They only get listening by accident to people's tongues going a deal too fast and free."

"That's meant for me, I suppose," said the doctor, laughing. "Never mind, Oakum, we shall not quarrel. I think you'll like Oakum, Mr. Studwick."

"Thank you," said the young man, sharply; "but I only take your medical advice, Mr. Meldon. Come, Bessy, it's chilly here."

"But the sun is getting warmer every moment, John," said his sister, gently. "I think you will be all the better for staying on deck."

"I'm sure you will," said the doctor, smiling, and passing on.

"I'm sure I shall not," exclaimed the invalid, pettishly, while his eyes looked jealously and brightly at the young doctor. "Take me below, Bessy. There, I can walk—come along. Mr. Oakum is right—men's tongues do go too freely here."

Bessy looked at him sadly, and then, smiling pleasantly as he raised his eyes, walked with him to the cabin door.

"I hope you will not take any notice of my son's sharp remarks, doctor," said Captain Studwick, overtaking the two young men, for he had overheard what had passed.

"Not I, indeed, captain," said the doctor, frankly. "I think I understand what it means, and I should be a poor student of human nature if I visited his petulance upon him. We shall be the best of friends before long, captain, I'll be bound."

"I hope so, I'm sure," said the captain, gloomily; "for it's quite possible that we may need to hold well together before our trip is over."

"Do you anticipate any danger, captain?" said Wilson, turning pale.

How a Piano Grows.

A FRENCH writer, the other day, made some very uncomplimentary allusions to the facial aspect of some of the Englishwomen who were visiting the Paris Exhibition, and, amongst other remarks, compared their projecting front teeth to piano keys. Now, as far as size goes, this was no compliment; but if their teeth were of such a delicious ivory white as were the keys of the pianos we saw in progress the other day at the large manufactory of Messrs. John Brinsmead and Sons, "The Brinsmead Works," Kentish Town, the ladies in question would not have much cause to complain. Very few people trouble themselves much about the why and the wherefore of the familiar objects they have in their homes. They have an Indian cabinet, say; and they know it came from India, and that it is very handsome. That is all. By the same rule, they have a piano in their house. It is of a good tone, and it cost so much. That is all they know about a piano—except, perhaps, that it is very hard to play well, without more practice than they care to give. This being the case, though we have treated previously of the same theme, a short notice of the process of manufacture of this most familiar of musical instruments will not be out of place.

Perhaps no point is more striking than the vast stride that has taken place in the manufacture of a piano during the past few years; and how poor and unelaborated the instruments even of the same firm, twenty years ago, appear as compared with the magnificent pieces of mechanism which are turned out here by the thousand, in prices ranging from thirty or forty guineas to three hundred.

Naturally, the first portion of a piano in the course of construction to call for attention is the wood, though iron is largely introduced—not wholly, as in the case of American pianos, but partially; for where wood and iron are used in combination all the

brilliancy of tone of an iron instrument is obtained, while the expansion and contraction of the metal are counteracted by the wood, as in a compensation pendulum. This, then, is the principle adopted here, with the result that a magnificent class of instrument is produced.

Entering the yard, then, rough frameworks of iron are to be seen in plenty, with all the coarseness of a new cast, and the red rust of oxidization full upon the metal; but a few steps farther shows a shed in which is a japanning oven, where the iron frames, after being rubbed down smoothly, are coated with japan, and beautifully lacquered, those in a finished state being ornamental to a degree.

Passing again into the wood yard, we are led amongst large stacks of wood carefully cut into certain widths and lengths, according to the special part of the instrument for which they are intended, and piled up in a particular manner so as to allow the air to pass freely through the stacks, some of which are eighty or ninety feet high. This is the store of wood undergoing its first seasoning; for no wood is used until it is many years of age, whatever may be done by a cheap maker. Here, then, we have, undergoing the material course of drying, American tulip wood, beech, sycamore, chestnut, walnut, mahogany, rosewood, and pine. Where whole trees have been cut up into planks, these planks are separated by thin strips of wood, leaving openings for the air to pass; but, as a rule, space is economized, and we do not see whole trees, but stacks of short boards, or squared pieces of wood roughly shaped for their future purpose.

As we pass through these piles of wood, and think of the havoc a fire would make, some of the piles which look black with exposure are already in course of demolition, men busily taking them down; and following one of the men, it is into a large building, whose atmosphere strikes us as being particularly soft and warm, while there is a peculiar, not unpleasant, odour of wood in the place. This is the seasoning-house, where the wood that has been stacked for years in the yard is to undergo a fresh drying, for the men are piling up here the stack they took down in the yard, every board, stick, and plank being so arranged that the air heated by steam-pipes shall pass through the interstices, and gradually and steadily dry it to a state when no moisture can exist within, and cause warp or twist in the finished piano.

This process of seasoning goes on for years; for as we followed the wood through the various stages of manufacture, sawing by machinery, and planing by machinery, to be afterwards fitted up into backs, and frames, cases, sounding-boards, and all the rest of the many portions of a piano, we find that the process of making these various parts is always going on by a division of labour, and that as fast as the separate parts are made they are returned into store, where they lie for months, perhaps a year or two, before they are served out in sets to the men who fit them together. Thus it is that the portions of woodwork go on dry—dry—drying for a very long space of time, the final result being excellence in the capacity of the perfected instrument to stand unchanged.

It is a pleasant and an attractive scene, where the

worst odour that meets the nostrils is that of the glue; and even that, as it seethes in its steam-heated cauldrons, is counteracted by the fragrance of the wood, some of which, probably of the rosewood, exhales a very agreeable fragrance in the course of being worked. Every one is busy, too busy to give more than a passing glance at the visitors; for the men work on the piece, and are paid according to the number of piano portions they produce. Another point worthy of notice, too, is, that while many of the men are middle-aged and even grey, numbers are very youthful, there being plenty of boys—a fact which is explained as follows:—

The great desire of Messrs. Brinsmead and Sons is to obtain good workmen, and these, when obtained, are as carefully retained, and encouraged to bring their sons into the business. In this way, then, a father may be having one or two of his boys working under his supervision, and learning an excellent trade, the result being a mutually advantageous one for employers and employed; for a man's earnings are largely increased, and the employers have always growing up a young staff of proficient workmen, ready to increase the force of labour that is constantly being necessitated by the vast growth of the works. For not only of late years has the stock been largely increased, but new floors have been added, and consequently the number of pianos produced is largely augmented.

We pass through shop after shop, in some of which the men seem occupied in ordinary carpenter's work—fitting up the more solid portions of the interior with plane, chisel, and mallet. In others the sounding-boards are being formed of beautiful satiny Swiss pine, all as clear as wood can be, for not a vestige of a knot is to be seen. Farther on we find young men engaged in fitting strings to the pegs and pins, and stretching them across the pianos, the noise being jarring in the extreme, as, after the thin steel glistening wire is looped over the bottom pegs, and twisted round the upper, this upper peg is driven firmly into the woodwork, with a peculiar jangling sound, as all the wires tremble and vibrate while issuing the tones that some day will be tutored into harmony. And now a word upon this stringing of the instruments. The process takes place in a very early stage, for the main object is to get the tension on the piano frame as soon as possible. The woodwork, as we have seen, is always being seasoned. The strings are always being tuned to bring them to exactly the right pitch, and stop the constant giving and stretching of the earlier stages.

To effect this, boys give the strings the first rough tuning with wrist and a peg, long before the hammers and keys are added, and this process is called "chipping-in." Twang, twang, twang go the wires, as they unmusically protest against the treatment; C's and D's in the centre—a stave wildly kicking, so to speak, against their education, and insisting upon being B's and E's, or flats and sharps, where they ought to be naturals, coming down, though, by slow degrees to a knowledge of the fact that their duty in the future is to emit one note of one particular pitch; and to this breaking-in they gradually come. These wires are generally in

threes, and of steel, but the lower notes are in pairs, and are like gimp, a centre wire covered with a coil of copper, while in the lowest notes they are single graduated sets, being served out for the boys to fit on.

These wires are placed in some instruments upright, in others half obliquely, and in others, again, fully oblique, so as to get a greater length of string—such pianos being termed upright grands, and obliques, while the horizontal grands preserve their old harpsichord shape, and the strings are, of course, strung horizontally.

In one especial room workmen are busy covering the hammers; and this is done with a felt of American or Prussian manufacture, expressly prepared for the purpose. A sheet of the beautiful white elastic material is handed to us, and we find that at one end it is very thick, perhaps a quarter of an inch, and then it fines gradually off to somewhere about an eighth at the thin end—the object being, of course, to suit it for the various hammers, a reference to the inside of any piano showing that the bass keys have a very thick coating of felt, and the lightest treble one that is thin to a degree. This felt is wonderfully perfect and regular in its make, and, when cut into slips and bevelled off, is glued on to the hammers and fixed there with spring nippers till dry. *Apropos* of glue, some idea of the extent of the Brinsmead Works may be obtained when we state that five hundred pounds' worth of this retentive material is used in a year; and this even when some pianos have none used in their manufacture whatever, copper and brass pins being utilized instead, as the instruments are intended for the hot, moist climates of the tropics, where glue would grow damp and release the veneers. Pianos for this purpose are made of solid wood, mostly mahogany. Specimens of these instruments are seen, they being of the kind supplied to the Peninsular and Oriental steamers.

To some people the word veneer is suggestive of something cheap and common, a thin covering being used instead of the solid wood. Let them set aside this idea at once, for the veneering is to supply a beautifully grained wood of an ornamental character, out of which, setting aside the expense, it would be impossible to form the case of an instrument. For instance, a large proportion of Messrs. Brinsmead's pianos are externally of beautifully marked Turkish walnut or rosewood. Now, this rosewood is supplied in thin sheets, carefully sawn from logs far too costly for use as boards, while the walnut is in rough pieces, like leather, being portions of a burr or excrescence on the walnut trees of Asia Minor, the rough masses such as we see on our own elms. These are internally beautifully mottled, and, the burr having been boiled and steamed till it is of the consistence almost of leather, the veneers are shaved off with a powerful instrument, dried, and sent over in packets of leaves, which, after being again moistened with hot glue, are fitted to the mouldings or sides of our pianos, pressed on with great force, dried, and then smoothed and polished with the effect we know.

Not always, though, do we have the grained wood. Many very handsome pianos are ebonized, and lightened with gold. Pearwood is the material turned

to this jetty hue, and when polished it has an admirable effect.

Step by step the pianos progress in growth as we follow them, after a visit to several rooms, where, in a pleasant temperature, we see stacked and numbered every one of the especial portions of a piano waiting to be fitted together. In one room all is wood, and we see unpolished the cut fretworks of the fronts, and carved legs and trusses. In another we have leather and screws, and ivory and ebony hammers, all waiting their turn. Sets are served out to the various fitters, and each performs his part; till at last—fitted, tuned constantly, silked, and at last polished—piano after piano goes down below, in a lift, and is ready for a fresh tuning.

It is now a very handsome piece of furniture; but our words of praise are checked, and we are told that it requires a final polishing, and that it has not yet been regulated, being somewhat hard in tone. The pianos in this stage are shut up in a carefully deadened room, where the tuner can in peace and quietness detect the failures of his charge. His ear, attuned by years of practice, is ready to jar at the slightest discord, and, with infinite patience, he does his part. But even now all is not done; for the piano, clear of the works, has to submit to a final ordeal. Mr. Horace Brinsmead, who superintends the factory, and to whose courtesy we are indebted for the facilities placed in our way for obtaining these materials, having despatched his finished piano, it has to undergo a final testing at Wigmore-street, at the hands of Mr. John Brinsmead, the head of the firm, or at those of Mr. Edgar Brinsmead. It is astonishing to what a pitch the ear can be trained; for what would satisfy an ordinary pianist utterly jars upon the senses of the experienced gentleman who superintends this extensive range of works.

Our notice is at best but a very cursory one; for a volume would not exhaust the wonders of the establishment, where everything is orderly, and moves with the smoothness of some vast machine. For instance, a piano when finished is found to have some defect in it. "Who made it?" is the question. The number is glanced at, and then reference is made to a series of cheque-books, in which, carefully recorded, are to be found the entries which show who were the workmen engaged upon every part of that instrument; so that the defect is brought home to the very man who made some special portion of the works, if it was not the artizan who fitted some portions together.

One certainly does not learn to play a piano with facility by paying a visit to the Brinsmead Works; but the amount of knowledge obtained by a walk through is something to be proud of, and one feels a fresh kind of respect for a piece of mechanism upon every portion of which so much care and skill have been lavished. Such an establishment is not the growth of a few years, but of many; and when we see the attention given to every trifling point, it is easy to see how it is that so great an excellence has been maintained. To a house of such repute, it is of vital importance that everything it turns out should be of the best; and this we seem to have, so far as human foresight, well invested capital, and

skill can procure it. Henceforth a chord on a piano will have for our ears a different tone, for we feel a kind of parental interest in an instrument that we have watched from its nebulous state; for, given wood, wire, and glue, we have seen how a piano grows—the fertilizing power, however, has been the brains.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"THAT'S it, go on," growled Matt in an undertone. "They're all getting better, sir; and, consequently, they're as cross as two sticks. What a thing it is! There seems to be no gratitude amongst them; and really, sir, if it wasn't for the nurses, it wouldn't be such a bad place to come to—that is, for a man with strong nerves, you know. Now, just look at 'em, how they are going it!"

The murmurings and dissensions of the other patients seemed to have quite a good effect upon old Matt, who forgot his own pains in the troubles of those around him.

"You don't know how much longer you will be here?" said Septimus.

"Not for certain, sir; but I think only for a few more days. But it's wonderful what a difference they have made in me. I mean to go in for a fortune, sir, as soon as I'm out; and then I shall make my will, and leave half to the hospital. Now I've got the worst of it all over, I amuse myself with taking a bit of notice of what goes on around me, and listening to what's said; and it's wonderful what an amount of misery comes into this place—wonderful! I've known of more trouble since I've been in here, sir, than I should have thought there had been in the whole of London; and that's saying no little, sir. Lots die, you know; but then see how many they send out cured. I don't see all, but one hears so much from the talking of the nurses. I expected when I came here that there would be plenty of accidents, broken bones—legs, arms, and ribs, and so on; but there, bless you, the place is full of it; and they're getting to such a wonderful pitch now, with their doctoring and surgery, that they'll be making a new man next, out of the odd bits they always have on hand here."

"I suppose so," said Septimus, drily.

"Ah, you may laugh, sir," said Matt; "but it's wonderful to what a pitch surgery has got. Now, for instance, just fancy—"

"There," cried Septimus, "pray stop, or I must leave you. I fancy quite enough involuntarily, without wishing to hear fresh horrors. It's bad enough having to come into the place."

"Lor' bless you, sir," said Matt, "you should listen to the nurses, when one of 'em happens to be in a good humour. Do you know when that is, sir?"

"When pleased, I suppose," said Septimus.

"Just so, sir; the very time. And when do you suppose that last is?"

Septimus shook his head.

"You don't know, of course, sir. Why, when the patients are getting better."

"I might have supposed that," said Septimus, wearily.

The old man chuckled, and looked brighter than he had looked for weeks.

"Yes," he said, "it's when the patients are getting better, and there's plenty of port wine and gin on the way. That's the time to find the nurse in a good humour; and she'll tell you anything, or do anything for you."

Septimus Hardon looked weary and anxious, and fidgeted in his chair, as if he longed to change the conversation; but the garrulous old man kept on.

"Tell you what, sir, these nurses seem to get their hearts hardened and crusted over; and then, when you give them a little alcohol, as the teetotalers call it, the crust gets softened a bit, and things go better. I used to growl and go on terribly at first; but it's no use to swim against the stream. I used to grumble when I found that they drunk half my wine and watered my gin; but I'm used to that sort of thing now: for which is best—to drink all one's liquor or keep friends with the nurse? Last's best; and they say I'm a dear, patient old creature. I look it, too, don't I?" said the old man, with a grim smile.

"But," said Septimus, "I must soon go; and I should like a word or two about my affairs first."

"All right, sir; we'll come to that directly. I'm an invalid, and you must humour me. But this is the way of it. My nurse comes to me, like an old foxey vixen as she is, and—'Now, my dear, how are we?' she says. 'Only middling, nurse,' I say. 'I've brought you a glass of wine to cheer you up,' she says. 'Don't care about it a bit,' I say; 'don't feel wine hungry.' 'Oh,' she says, 'but the doctor ordered it. Now, take it, like a good soul. You must want it.' 'Not half so bad as some people do,' I say. 'Toss it off, nurse; and just punch my pillow up a bit—it's got hard and hot.' 'Bless my heart, no,' she says, 'I couldn't think of such a thing!' So she sets the wine down, and puts my head a bit comfortable. 'The wine's for you; so, now, take it directly; I couldn't touch it—I don't care for wine.'

"Of course you don't," I say to myself; and then I begin to talk to her a bit, and to tell her that she must have a sad wearing life of it, when the old tabby sets up her back and purrs, and likes it all—looking the while as tigerish, and sleek, and clawey, as the old cats can look. Then I tell her she wants more support, and so on, when all at once she finds out that there's some one else to attend upon, and I must drink my wine directly; so I take the glass and perhaps drink it; but more often I only just put it to my lips and set it back upon the tray, when she's satisfied. Of course, you know, it would be instant dismissal for a nurse to drink a patient's wine or spirits if it was known; but anything left is different altogether. You know, sir, it's a dreadfully beggarly way of going to work, only, as the saying goes, you must fight some one we know of with his own weapons; and now we are the very best of friends possible. You'd be surprised how we get along, and all through going without a glass now and then. The best of it is, though, that she never thinks of watering it now, like she would for another patient; so that what I miss in quantity I get in

strength, and, you know, she'll do anything for me in a minute—that is, if she feels disposed.”

“But,” said Septimus, “it seems strange that you should be so left at the mercy of these women.”

“What can you do?” said the old man. “There, I’ve just done, sir, and we’ll go into that directly. Who can you get to go through what these women do, unless it’s these Sisters of Mercy, who many say are to become general? Suppose there was a strike, eh? Look how few people you can get to come and run the risk of fevers and all sorts of diseases. Sisters of Mercy, eh? God bless them for it, then, if they will; but I hope I may never want their help, all the same. But there, we won’t talk about it, only you want iron women a’most to go through it all, and it’s not a life to be envied. Why, if it aint almost leaving-time, sir, and you’ve kept me chatting about my affairs here, and yours are nowhere. How are you getting on?”

“Badly, Matt—badly. But I’ve very little to say, Matt, for I was unable to get on without you,” replied Septimus, smiling at the old man’s coolness.

“’Spose so,” said Matt, laconically; “let’s see, sir, I think you never went any more to Finsbury?”

“Where was the use?” said Septimus, drearily; “who can tell where a day-book fifty years old can be?”

“True,” said the old man, thoughtfully; “butter-shop, most likely; and it wouldn’t pay to go all over London buying half pounds of ‘best Dorset,’ on the chance of getting the right sheet. I can’t see it yet, sir; and still I seem to fancy we shall do it, though everything about it seems to be all in a muddle.”

Septimus Hardon seemed to be of the same opinion, for he sighed, took his hat, and went homeward in a frame of mind that made him feel disposed to bury the past and its cares, and look only to the future; while old Matt picked up a newspaper, and began mechanically folding it into small squares—butter-shop size.

“No,” he muttered, “not much chance of finding that particular scrap of paper, if we don’t get hold of the book through the old doctor’s heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns. And that’s where we ought to begin; putting ads. in the *Times*, and setting private inquirers to work, and all on to that tune; only, to play that tune, sir, you want money. Some careless hussy has burnt that scrap of paper, sir, long ago, to light a fire; or it has been used for twisting up screws of tobacco, or ha’porths of toffee, or hundreds of other things as some beggarly shop or another is licensed to deal in. Only fancy some one lighting his pipe with that valuable little scrap of paper! ‘Medicine and attendance, Mrs. Hardon, two, twelve, six!’ I’ll be bound to say that was the figure, and I’d give something to get hold of that bit. Wonder whether it’s selfishness, and thinking of what it would be worth to me? S’pose so; for this is a rum world, and I’m no better than I should be. But who’d ever have thought this would have come out of my going to his office and asking for a job? Don’t matter, though, about what I feel, for he’d have come to see me here safe enough, even if it had not been about his affairs; for he’s a trump, sir, a trump; but all

the same, it’s a pity he aint got more in him—worldly stuff, you know.”

Old Matt sat very thoughtfully for awhile, and then began to mutter again.

“Wish I had a pinch of snuff once more. There, now; I’m blest. Only to think of that! me having my box in my pocket, and to forget all about it—shows what my head’s worth now. Bravo! though; that seems to clear one’s head wonderfully. I shall recommend its use in lunatic asylums for mental diseases; fine thing, I believe. Only to think, though, for me to get that into my head about that entry I had seen, and trying to write it down, and then for it to be clean gone once more! S’pose I did think of something of the kind, or see it, or something. Heigho!” he sighed; “I must have been precious bad, though, sir—confoundedly bad. Thank goodness it’s all over, though, for this time; and I’m going to walk out soon, instead of, as I expected, being taken to the students’ lodgings in small pieces, wrapped up in paper—paper—waste-paper—by jingo! though, I’ll have a go at the waste-paper everywhere. I’ll search every waste-paper shop in London, beginning at Mother Slagg’s—beg her pardon, Gross by this time, I suppose, and—and—hooray!” he shouted, wildly, to the intense astonishment of the fellow-patients, as he tossed his newspaper in the air. “Snuff for ever! that pinch did it. Only let me get out of this place. At last!”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—MR. JARKER’S TRAITS.

MEN of business cannot afford to continue their grief for any length of time, hence at a very short date after the death of his wife, Mr. William Jarker, birdfancier, birdcatcher, and pigeon-trapper, to be heard of at any time at the Blue Posts, Hemlock-court, by such gents as wanted a few dozen of blue-rocks or sparrows for the next trap-match at Wormwood Scrubbs, stood before a piece of looking-glass nailed to the wall of his room with three tin-tacks, a ragged, three-cornered, wavy-looking scrap, from which, if a little more of the quicksilver had been rubbed off, it would never again have been guilty of distorting the human face divine. Upon this occasion it played strange pranks with the expressive countenance of Mr. Jarker, as he stood, with oily fingers, giving the required gloss and under-turn to his side-locks, which were of the true “Newgate-knocker” pattern, their length denoting how long a time Mr. Jarker had been running fancy free without troubling her Majesty’s officials for his daily rations and lodging, in return for which he would scrub, polish, and clean to order. Mr. Jarker seemed to take extra pains over his toilet, arranging his neck-tie and the silver-mounted lens, buttoning-up his red-plush waistcoat with the fustian back and sleeves, cleaning his finger-nails with the broken-out tooth of a comb, before he stood in front of the glass and smirked at himself.

Now, this was a mistake on Mr. Jarker’s part, for his was a style of countenance that would not bear a smirking; there was too much stiffness of contour in the various features, a blunt angularity which resisted the softening sweetness of a smirky smile,

and the consequence was, that if he had smirked at a stranger, the said stranger would have flinched from a very strong impression that Mr. Jarker was rabid and about to bite. However, mistaken or not, Mr. Jarker smirked several times, and after various patterns, before he frowned, which gave a much more respectable cast to his countenance, the scowl being most thoroughly in harmony. Mr. Jarker frowned, for one of the side-locks would not keep in position and retain the required bend when he had crowned himself with his slouchy fur-cap; so the erring hair had to be again oiled, combed, and wetted with a solution of brown sugar, which the operator moistened in a natural way in the palms of his hands, then the lock was smoothed and tucked under, and proved a fixture! and now the cap was again placed in position, and displayed a thin wisp of crape fastened round it by means of a piece of string; for being a soldier engaged in the battle of life, Mr. Jarker did not doff his uniform, but confined himself to the above slight manifestation of the fact that he was a widower.

Apparently satisfied with his aspect, which was a little more villanous than usual, Mr. Jarker turned his attention to the child, who crouched in a corner of the room with a piece of bread in her hand, watching him with her large blue eyes, very round and staring, but evidently pressing her little self as far away from the fellow as possible.

"Ah! and so she comes and plays with the kid when I'm out, does she?" said Mr. Jarker, in a ruminating tone. "Ah! we knows what that means, my chicking, don't we?"

The little thing pressed herself closer to the wall, and Mr. Jarker stood very thoughtfully at the window for a few minutes, gazing down at where Lucy's sewing-machine beat rapidly; but Mr. Jarker was not aware that in his turn Jean Marais was watching him fiercely, his dark eyes seeming to flash beneath his overhanging penthouse brows, as he eagerly scanned every motion of the ruffian, looking the while as if prepared to spring across the court at his throat.

"Ah! we knows what that means, don't we, my chicking?" repeated Mr. Jarker, turning once more from the window. "Come here to yer daddy, d'yer hear!"

But though hearing plainly enough, the little thing only shrank back closer into her corner; when, with an oath, the fellow took two steps forward and seized the little thing by its pinky, shelly ear, and dragged it, whimpering and trembling, into the middle of the attic, where he made "an offer" at it as if to strike; but the frailty and helplessness of the little one disarmed even him, and as his eyes wandered to the window to see that no opposite neighbour could watch them where they stood, his arm fell to his side as he sat down.

"Now, then!" cried Mr. Jarker, "no pipin'; don't you try none of them games with me, my young warmin'. 'Cos why, it's ware hawks to yer if yer does. Now hook it back to that there corner."

The child's eyes were turned timidly and wonderingly up to his, as it shrank back once more to the corner of the attic.

"Now, then!" cried Jarker, sharply, "come here again."

Like an obedient dog in the course of training, the little thing crept back to his side, and then the tiny face grew more wondering and timid, the eyes more round, and it was very evident that the little brain, soft, plastic, and ready to receive any impression, was working hard to understand the meaning of the ruffian's words. Bright and beautiful as the faces shown to us on canvas as those of angels, the little countenance, shining the brighter for the squalor around, was turned up more and more towards Jarker, gazing so fixedly and earnestly at him that he grew uneasy, fidgeted and shuffled his feet, and then his eyes sank, guilt cowering before innocence; for, quite disconcerted by the long, steady gaze, the ruffian rose and turned away, growling and muttering, "She's gallus deep for such a little un." He then took a short peep at his pigeons, walked back to the window, and stared long and heavily at the white hands he could see busy at the sewing-machine, and then turned once more to the wondering atom, trying to soften himself as he stooped down, but the child only flinched as from a coming blow when he patted the soft, bright curls.

"Here, come here," he said, gently; and he drew the child between his knees as he sat down. "Now mind this here: nex' time she comes and plays with you, my chickin', perhaps she'll say, 'Would you like me to be your new mammy?' she'll say; and then, 'Yes,' says you; d'yer hear? 'yes,' says you. Now say it."

But the little one only continued her wondering gaze till the fellow left her, and slouched out of the room, after raking the last cinder from the fire, in performing which he knocked the bottom of the grate from its frail hold, and then, in his endeavours to replace it, burned his fingers, and ejaculated so loudly that the eyes of the child were turned upon him more wonderingly than ever.

And then—was it that sympathy for the child moved the inmate of the opposite attic, or that he had a natural hatred for Jarker? Jean turned angrily from the window to a cage of half-a-dozen linnets the fellow had brought him an hour or two before, and, to his mother's rage and astonishment, seemed about to wreak his fury upon the birds. He seized one in his hand, and was about to wring its neck, but *ma mère* leaped forward to stay him, when his fierce gesture sent her back to her seat to watch him. But he did not kill the birds, but carried the cage to the window, and then let them go, one by one, till the last bird hesitated at the wire door for a few moments, and then fled, with a wild chirp of joy far away into the smoky air.

"Jean, Jean! but you are *bête-fou*!" exclaimed his mother, trembling with fear and rage at this folly, as she thought of the money he had given for the birds.

"I hate him, I hate him!" hissed Jean, furiously, while, watching him through her closed eyes, the old woman nodded quickly to herself, as she muttered and thought of her own early days, and it seemed to her that Jean's heart was as easy to read as that printed book at his side.

But at this time Mr. Jarker was slouching out of

his room, and shouldering his way down the stairs, stopping the blowing of Mrs. Sims' fire for an instant, as he growled audibly in passing; then down into the court, where the index fingers of his hands were thrust into his mouth, and he was about to make a long and piercing whistle for the delectation of some passing pigeons as they flew over the strip of heaven seen from the flags of the court; but a glance at the first-floor window, where dwelt the Hardons, checked him. The next minute, though, the birds repassed, and Bill whistled loudly again and again; but the birds would not listen to this shrill voice of the charmer, so the charmer himself, side-locks and all, went and stood at the bottom of the court, against the bright blue gilt-lettered boards of the public, where he rubbed the shoulders of his sleeve-waistcoat shiny, as he stood slouching about, and sucking one end of his spotted necktie.

"Watcher going to stand, Bill?" said a gentleman of his acquaintance, a gentleman with a voice singularly like one that had been heard in the old Grange at Somesham upon a memorable night. This gentleman had a piece of straw in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets, his coiffure being of the same order as that of Mr. Jarker, while, being evidently of a terpsichorean turn of mind, he enlivened the street with a "pitter-patter, pitter-patter, pit-pit, pat," toe-and-heel dance upon the cellar flap of the public-house, where, his boots being stout and well-nailed, and the flap very hollow beneath, his efforts were attended with so much noise that the potboy of the establishment thrust out a closely-cropped head between the swing doors, where he held it as if in the process of being shorn off, at the same time requesting the light-heeled gentleman to "Drop that 'ere now, come!"

But instead of standing anything to quench the thirst of the new-comer, Mr. Jarker stood upon the order of his going; for just then, laden with a large parcel of work, Lucy Grey passed out of the court and encountered Mr. Sterne, who saluted, and then turned with a grave, pained countenance to gaze after her, as he saw Jarker follow, slouching along as if his boots were soled with lead, diver-fashion, and he of so ethereal a nature that the ponderous metal was necessary to prevent him from shooting up into heaven like a stickless rocket minus the tail of fire.

The curate turned thoughtfully up the court, and began his round of visits, listening to complaints here, supplications there, but finding nowhere rest. He went thoughtfully through his round of duties that day, hearing and speaking mechanically, for always before his eyes there was the light, graceful form of Lucy, followed by the bound-like Jarker, and as he thought, the lines grew deeper and deeper in his forehead. He listened to Mrs. Sims' praises of the child—praises delivered in a lachrymose tone, as a strong odour of rum pervaded the place. He listened to *ma mère's* complaints of Jean, and felt an insinuation against her fellow-lodger's fair fame stab him as it were to the heart, while surprised he gazed upon the fury with which the son turned upon his mother; and then descending, his task nearly done, the curate sat by the bedside of Mrs. Hardon.

There stood the sewing-machine in the next room; there was the chair in which Lucy had been so lately seated, and where even now he could picture her form. But, silent and abstracted, he listened for the twentieth time to the story of the murmuring woman's troubles, and what she had suffered since they had been in town. He listened, but he was asking himself the while whether Lucy merited the love he would pour at her feet—asking himself whether it was possible for a pure, fair, spotless lily to bloom amidst the pollution around. Still, too, came the remembrance of the words of the old Frenchwoman—"Our beauty, some of us." Once admitting doubt to his breast, the strange thoughts teemed in, bringing up the woman he had seen and tracked in vain, and above all the low ruffian whom he had seen dogging the fair girl's footsteps but that very day, when love had whispered, "Follow!" and pride cried, "Nay, stand aloof!" for he recalled their last interview. Then, again, he asked himself how dared he believe words that slurred her fair fame, when his conscience whispered to him that they were like their source—vile; but, surrounded as he was by vice and misery, might he not well wonder whether Lucy's fair face spoke truth in its candour-tinged aspect, or was like the hundreds he encountered in his daily walks—fair to view, but with a canker within?

He told himself that he could watch her no longer—that he could not play the spy; and once again he prayed for strength to conquer the passion that seemed to sway him at its will; for he could not comprehend the behaviour of its object. Love he had thought to be buried for ever with his betrothed; but from her grave the seed seemed to have returned to him untainted by time, and with all its quickening, germinating powers ready to shoot forth and blossom in a wealth of profusion for another. And he knew that it must be lavished upon Lucy, even though she still repulsed him. And now, again, his eye brightened as, dashing down the sinister thoughts, he would see only her faith and truth, smiling at poverty when he called up the riches of her heart—riches that he saw poured forth for the murmuring parent, for whose wants she toiled on incessantly, winning for her many a comfort that the sick woman could not else have enjoyed; and even then with the overflowings of her young heart ready for the neglected child.

"For the neglected child!" What a gloomy starting-point for another train of thought, embracing its mother, tall, dark, and rouge-checked; Jarker, the ruffian, tracking Lucy's steps; and lastly, *ma mère*, who seemed even then whispering in his ear, "Our beauty, some of us!" Arthur Sterne acknowledged that he was weak, though he fought hard with his soul-assailing enemies; while the track of the storm he was encountering was marked in his face, as he strolled slowly homewards, but only to pause startled at the mouth of the court.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—LUCY'S TROUBLE.

LUCY'S eyes turned very dim as soon as she had passed Mr. Sterne, and things wore a strangely blurred aspect. She would have given worlds to have thrown herself upon his breast, and told all—

of Agnes Hardon and her sorrow, confided to her alone as the suffering woman begged of her to love her for her child's sake, and not to turn upon her the cold bitter eyes of the world at large; and again and again, Lucy had taken the passive, wasted, tearful face of Agnes to her breast, in the rare and stealthy meetings they had had, and wept over her, little knowing that Agnes possessed a secret which she felt that she could not divulge for the sake of those whom she had injured. Again and again Lucy had implored her leave to confide in Septimus Hardon, but Agnes had refused so firmly, telling her that the day her presence was betrayed would be that of their last meeting—telling her so angrily, but only to kneel at her feet the next moment, and ask her to bear for a little longer with an erring woman, whose stay in this world might not be for long. And so Lucy toiled on, bearing the scathing breath of calumny; pointed at by suspicion; and wounded again and again in her tenderest feelings by the only man she had ever felt that she could love. They were her own words, poor girl, though little had she seen of the world at large. She told herself that it was cruel of him to treat her as he did; but what could she do? And then she shivered as she thought of stolen meetings by night—meetings which should take place no more—while she wept bitterly as she hurried through the streets thinking of the misery of her lot.

She had no veil to her shabby bonnet, and it was only at last by a strong effort that she forced back the tears; for she felt that people were staring hard at her as she passed. But it was no unusual thing for people to look hard at Lucy Grey, while there was variety in those glances; there were, from women, the glance of envy, the look of sisterly admiration, and that bordering upon motherly love; and there were the hard stare from puppydom, the snobbish ogle, looks of love and respect, every glance that could dart from human eye; but the poor girl hurried on as in a dream, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, but bent upon the object of her journey. It was nothing to her that behind at a few yards' distance came Mr. William Jarker, favouring every one with a fierce scowl in return for the glances bestowed upon her, as he tracked her with the pertinacity of a bloodhound, turning when she turned, crossing when she crossed. Once only on her way back did Lucy tremble, when a fiercely-bearded, middle-aged dandy half stopped in front of her, so that she was compelled to turn a little out of her path, as with a heightened colour her eyes sank before the fellow's insulting stare. But she did not hear his words, as, fervently wishing old Matt were by her side, she hurried on.

It sometimes happens, though, that those who are working for their own devices do us many a good turn; and it was so here, for as the studiously-dressed and bejewelled dandy turned and followed the fair girl, he suddenly became aware of a rough shoulder forcing him aside, when turning angrily, with umbrella raised to strike, he gazed full into the heavy, bull-dog countenance of Mr. Jarker, whose white teeth gleamed beneath his flattened nose as though he were preparing to fasten on his victim.

The next moment the lemon-gloved hands were covering chain and pin, and the heavy swell of the London current subsided slowly and disappeared, leaving Lucy unmolested as she hurried on, followed still closely by her self-constituted bodyguard, of whose presence she was ignorant; while, five minutes after, he made a side-bound into a doorway, where he stood peering round the post and smiling like some hideous satyr of old, as Lucy encountered Agnes Hardon, and stopped in the quiet street where they then were.

The sight must have been very gratifying to Mr. Jarker, for he stood leering, and rubbing his soft, whitish hands, pausing every now and then to have a good gnaw at the nails, already nearly worn down to the quick; and then stepping lightly from his concealment, he passed close behind Agnes as she was whispering—

"God bless you! Don't stay talking to me; go now. I'll get it away directly he will let me. I have been five times already; but he was either there, or some one of his companions waiting about."

Mr. Jarker gave a short, husky, forced cough as he passed, when, turning hastily, fear and anger seemed to combine in Agnes Hardon's face, as she caught Lucy's hands in her own, interposing herself, as if for protection, till Mr. Jarker had disappeared, when she hurried her away by another route, and hastily took her leave. But Lucy did not see her troubled, anxious face following at a short distance, and keeping her in sight till she reached the end of the court in time to encounter Mr. Sterne, who saw almost at one glance Lucy, with Jarker standing aside to let her pass as he bestowed upon her a familiar smile and nod, and Agnes Hardon some fifty yards beyond, turning hastily and hurrying off; but her he followed angrily, and with a suffocating sensation at his breast, as if he were, knight-errant-like, about to attack one of the evil genii who shadowed the life of her he loved. Fifty yards in advance, though, was Agnes, when he commenced following her steps, till a crowd around that common object of our streets, a fallen horse, intercepted his view; and, when he had passed the throng, the figure he sought had disappeared.

"O, this weary, weary deceit!" sobbed Lucy, throwing herself on her knees by her bedside and weeping bitterly. Then, sighing, she rose, folded her mantle, and bathed her eyes before going to the sitting-room, where in a few more minutes her sewing-machine was rapidly beating until Septimus came and, with one loving hand laid across her red eyes, took away the candle.

CHAPTER XL.—MATT'S DISCOVERY.

"HOLD hard here!" cried a voice from a cab window; and the driver of as jangling a conveyance as ever rattled over London stones drew up at the corner of Carey-street, Chancery-lane.

"I'll get out here," cried the voice; and very slowly, and with the aid of a stick, old Matt extricated himself from amongst the straw, a part of which he managed to drag out into the road.

The next minute the cabman was paid, and had

driven off. The boy who, with a basket slung across his back, had stopped to witness the disembarkation, and cut his popular song in half the while, resumed the refrain, and went on along the Lane; while, with a smile on his pale face, old Matt slowly made his way down Carey-street, stopping to rest at the first lamp-post.

"Here I am," he said; "King Space come back to his dominions. I wasn't going to ride, and lose the pleasure of seeing it all. Thank God there's no whitewash here, and everything's just as I left it; things looking as if they hadn't stirred a peg; and I don't suppose they have, if they haven't been costs, which certainly do grow and flourish well here. Lord, sir, how beautiful and smoky and natural everything looks once more! There's Hardon's old printing-office—ah, to be sure! 'Grimp, Deeds copied.' That's the trade to flourish here. Now then, sir, good morning! Let's get on a bit farther."

According to his old custom, and heedless now of its being broad daylight, Matt made his way slowly to the next post, making his crippled state an excuse now for stopping, though there was hardly a soul to be seen in Carey-street, and those who passed were too intent upon their own affairs to notice him.

"Slow work, sir," said Matt, stopping again—"glad to see you, though, once more. Thought at one time, if ever I did it would have been upon a cork leg, sir; for I couldn't have stood a wooden peg, sir, anyhow; a cork leg all springs and watchwork, like old Tom Christy's, as used to squeak with every step he took, just as if, being of cork, some one was trying to draw it; and he never oiled that leg, for fear it should go too easy. But there, I'm all right again," he continued, taking a pinch of snuff; "and I call this real enjoyment, sir—real enjoyment. Only wait till I've put him all right upon that point, and I'll have a bit of dissipation. Let's see: the Vice-Chancellor will be sitting, like a great god, listening to the prayers of the petitioners in Chancery. I'll have an hour there, sir, and then take a sniff of the ink in one of the old offices; and, confound it all, sir, I wish you could join me! I'll have half a pint of porter in Fetter-lane. I'm in for a regular round of dissipation, I am, just to make up for all this being shut up."

On again went the old man, rather short of breath, till he was well in sight of the hospital at the end of the street; when, raising his eyes just as he was about to stop, he caught sight of a pale, weary face at one of the windows, and shuddered and turned away; but the next moment he had stopped and turned, and was waving a hand to the patient gazing from his prison window.

"God bless you, mate!" said Matt aloud, "and may you soon be out of it!"

And then there was a reply waved to his salute, and the old man turned down the courts to the left, and soon stood in Bennett's-rents.

"What, Matt!" cried Septimus Hardon, hurrying to open the door as he heard his slow step upon the stairs; while Lucy took the old man's other hand and helped him to a seat.

"What's left of me, sir—what's left," said the old

man, cheerily; "and here I am, right and clear-headed, and I did see it all, sir: and I've recollected it, and got it all put down here, so as you can read it, and safe in my head too. It wasn't fancy, it was all right; and I did see it, as I told you, in what must have been the old doctor's books."

"But where? when?" cried Septimus, eagerly.

"And there was the name—'Mrs. Hardon, medicine and attendance, so much;' but of course I thought nothing of it then."

"But," cried Septimus, as he hooked a finger in a button-hole of the old man's coat, "where was it?"

"Gently, sir—gently," said Matt, unhooking the finger; "mind what you're after: stuff's tender. But there: you'll fit me out with a new suit when you're all right—won't you, sir, eh?"

"A dozen, Matt, a dozen!" cried Septimus, eagerly.

"And Miss Lucy here's to have as full a compassed pianner as can be got, without having one as would burst and break all the strings—eh, miss, eh?"

Lucy smiled sadly.

"But where did you see it, Matt—where was it?" exclaimed Septimus, inking his face in his excitement, and totally destroying his last hour's work.

"Why, sir, no farther off than at my lodgings," cried Matt, triumphantly. "I did mean to be of use to you if I could, and I've lived to do it, sir, and I'm thankful; but come along, sir—come along. I'm weak and poorly yet, and there seems to be a deal of water collected in my system—a sort of dropsy, you know; and it all flies to my eyes on the least provocation, and comes dripping out like that, just as if I was a great gal, and cried, d'y'e see?"

There was a tear in Septimus Hardon's eye as he warmly wrung the old man's hand, and ten minutes after they were standing in Lower Serle's-place, with Matt smiling grimly at a freshly-painted set of skeleton old bone letters upon a glossy black board, announcing "Isaac Gross, Dealer in Marine Stores;" but that was the only alteration visible, for Isaac and the stout lady occupied the same places as of yore, and were at the very moment engaged in an affectionate, smiling game of bo-peep.

"Might have waited for me to dance at the wedding!" muttered Matt.

But there had been very little dancing at the said wedding; while the trip necessary upon such occasions was one made to the Rye House, where Isaac's attention was principally taken up by the jack-boot shown amongst the curiosities—a boot which filled his imagination for days after, as he sighed and thought of the evanescent nature of his own manufacture.

The greeting was warm on both sides, Isaac smiling at a quicker rate than had ever before been known. But the visitors meant business, and Matt exclaimed—

"Now, Ike, we want to go over the waste paper."

Matt was outside as he spoke; and then Mrs. Gross, whose head had been stretched out to listen, found that what had been her property was in question, so she cried, "Stop!" and waddled from her seat to where Matt stood, seized him by the arm, and waddled him into Isaac's workshop, from whence she waddled him into the back

parlour, where his bed, now the only one in the room, was neatly made up, and the place somewhat tidier than of yore, though the waste paper heap was bigger than ever.

"Now," said Mrs. Gross, with a very fat smile and a knowing twinkle of her eye, as she sank her voice to a whisper, "is it deeds?" and then she looked at Isaac as if for approbation, that gentleman having followed them into the room, and being engaged in vain endeavours to thrust a very large finger into his very small pipe-bowl.

"Who married the kitchen stuff?" shouted a small voice at the door; and Mrs. Gross angrily waddled out in pursuit, to the great delight of half a score of the small inhabitants of Serle's-place, one of whom danced a defiant *pas seul* in a tray of rusty keys as he fled, laughing the while at the fat threatening hand held up. But Isaac stirred not, from having been accustomed to the gibes of the juveniles of the place, and his skin being too thick for such banderillos as "Waxy," "Welty," or "Strap-oil" to penetrate; so he merely stood wiping his nose upon his leather apron till his partner returned.

"Is it deeds?" whispered Mrs. Gross again; and then in a parenthesis, "Drat them boys!"

"No," said Matt, gruffly, "it aint."

"Then it's bank bills," said the lady, mysteriously, as she slyly winked at every one in turn, her husband smiling at her acute business perceptions.

"No, nor it aint them neither," said Matt.

"Then it's a will," said Mrs. Gross, in a disappointed tone; "and there aint a scrap of that sort in the place, for I sold out last week."

"Taint a will, I tell you," growled Matt.

"Then its dockymens," said Mrs. Gross, triumphantly.

And she nudged Matt in the side.

"No it aint; nor receipts, nor letters, nor nothing of the kind. If you must know, it's them old doctor's books; that's what it is. Now, where are they?"

But Mrs. Gross, though she had not the slightest idea as to what doctor's books were meant, was not yet satisfied, but cried—

"Halves!"

"What's halves?" said Matt.

"Why, we goes halves in what turns up," said Mrs. Gross, who had a famous eye for business, though she would keep dimming its brightness by winking at her visitors in a most unfeminine manner.

"Halves be hanged!" cried Matt, in a disgusted tone; "you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mother Slagg."

"Gross!" cried a sepulchral voice, which made Septimus start; till he found that it had proceeded from Mr. Isaac himself, though his face did not betray that he had spoken.

"Gross, then," growled Matt. "Now, look here," he continued; "it's nothing but an old entry as I once saw in some doctor's books on your counter here, and we want to see it; for I hadn't sense then to know it was any good. But if we find it, and it's what we want, my guv'nor here will stand a sovereign, I dessay."

"Put it down on paper, then," said Isaac, "and

make him sign," to the great admiration of his partner, who patted him upon the back for his display of business ability.

And then, before a paper was touched, Septimus Hardon, greatly to Matt's disgust, signed a promissory and conditional note for the amount named.

"Ikey," growled Matt, "I didn't think you had been such a Jew. If you haven't let my rooms, you can get yourself a fresh tenant."

But Isaac only smiled, and the task commenced—no light one—of turning over the huge stack of waste paper piled up before him. Dust, dirt, and mildew; brief paper, copying paper, newspaper, old books, old magazines and pamphlets, account books with covers and account books without; paper in every phase; while eagerly was everything in the shape of an account book seized upon, and the search continued, until, faint and weary, they had gone through the whole heap, when, with a despairing, doleful look, Septimus gazed upon Matt.

"I'll take my Bible oath it was in a book I saw laid upon that heap. Now, then, where's some more?" and the old man said it feebly, as if nearly exhausted.

"No more anywheres," said Mrs. Gross, assuringly, as she smoothed her husband's oily hair.

"Sure?" cried Matt.

Mrs. Gross nodded, and retied the ribbon which confined her husband's locks.

"Where is it, then?" cried Matt.

"Where is it?" repeated Mrs. Gross. "Why, if it aint here, in this heap, it's everywheres. It's sold, and burnt, and wrapped round 'bacca, and butter, and all sorts."

"Hadh't we better go, Matt?" whispered Septimus, dreamily washing his hands together after his dry custom.

"S'pose we had," muttered Matt. "Just, too, sir, as I'd made so sure as it was all coming right, and for the second time, too. Never mind, sir, it'll all come right yet. Third time never fails. What do you say to hunting up the Miss Thingumy at Finsbury, and hearing what she's got to say?—plenty, depend upon it. News, perhaps, and it can't do no harm."

But Septimus Hardon was in a weary, absent fit, and went away muttering, homewards, as, worn out and weak, Matt sat down upon the waste paper ruins of the palace he had built in his own mind, and grimly listened to the congratulations of his friends upon his return.

The London Angler's Resorts.

IN discussing this subject I shall confine my observations to rivers, ponds, reservoirs, &c., within the metropolitan area, and hope the information I have been able to collect concerning them may be of interest to the angling community. Let us commence by taking a cursory glance at some waters of minor importance. The ponds on Clapham and Wandsworth Commons are said to contain perch, carp, and roach; but I am strongly inclined to think they afford most sport to the numerous urchins who sally forth to the banks in summer with worms, string, stick, and glass bottle, in quest of stickle-

backs. A few years since there was a pond on the latter common where anglers occasionally took jack, perch, and roach; but it is now filled in with earth, and houses have been erected on the spot. There is still a pond on the same common, facing Bolingbroke-grove, from which a large but extremely coarse eel was taken a year or two ago. It was presented to a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood, who endeavoured to render it palatable for food, but his efforts met with signal failure. Again, so recently as this summer, the pond yielded up a short, thick roach of fair size.

Well do I remember the time when many anglers flocked to the Serpentine in Hyde Park, and frequently caught bream and roach, of which some very fine specimens are said to have been taken out when the lake was last drained; but angling here has been prohibited for a long time, in consequence, I believe, of the disorderly scenes which too often occurred on the banks. In the Hampstead and Highgate ponds, perch and carp may be found, besides the Regent's, Paddington, Grand Junction, and other canals; but I should be very loth to advise anybody to attempt angling in them unless he possesses an inexhaustible stock of patience. There are some good jack, perch, roach, and other fish, in the Stoke Newington reservoir, to angle in which leave may be obtained through a director of the company. Some of my friends acquainted with this water speak highly of it.

I must now say a few words about the Wandle. The river enters the Thames at Wandsworth, and though by no means so pure as it might be in the latter part of its course, yet it occasionally affords fair sport. Numerous anglers daily throng its banks near the South-Western railway bridge just below the village. One evening last month curiosity prompted me to walk that way, in order to watch their operations, when I found about thirty fishermen most zealously pursuing the gentle art. One or two of them were throwing a fly, and amongst the "takes" I noticed some nice roach and dace.

I have reserved the consideration of the Thames for our last point. We are all told there was a time when the lordly salmon leaped below London Bridge, and when good sport was obtained with many other descriptions of fish at Blackfriars, Westminster, and Battersea. Since then a great change has taken place; the salmon no longer leaps below London Bridge, and for years no fish could withstand the effects of the noxious gases and poisonous substances that found their way into the river near the great city. However, there is now a ray of hope; for if the means lately adopted for purifying the stream be successful, the river may again become tenanted by the finny tribe. Within the past few years reports have reached me of the capture of a jack weighing two pounds at Blackfriars Bridge, also of some roach and dace opposite the Houses of Parliament. One afternoon, not long since, I was strolling along the Embankment, and when approaching the site of the new opera house, now in course of construction, observed a crowd of persons against the wall overlooking the river. I was just hastening to ascertain, if possible, the cause of so much excitement, when a youth suddenly emerged from the throng,

grasping with both hands a fine eel, which I estimated to weigh nearly 3 lbs., and with which he ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, pursued by a knot of eager spectators. How he became possessed of the fish I never discovered; but presume he had caught it on one of the stone piers, whither it had been cast up by the unusually high tide which then prevailed. Eels, being partial to mud, are probably more abundant than any other fish in the Thames near London, especially in the vicinity of Battersea, where "bobbing" for them used to be a favourite pastime, and, for aught I know, is still.

Last winter I heard of some capital pike being taken in the creek opposite the "Feathers" at Wandsworth, a fish of 8 lbs. being reported as killed on one day, and another fish of 17 lbs. on the day following. In all probability they had selected this locality for the purpose of spawning. These favourable accounts which I have received respecting the Thames encourages me to believe there is already a marked improvement in the state of the water. Possibly it may, in course of time at least, become comparatively pure, and again harbour all kinds of fresh-water fish.

I have attempted to describe briefly the several waters above enumerated. I am being constantly told that angling is most unprofitable unless practised many miles away from London; and while there is generally too much truth in the remark, it is nevertheless certain that sport not to be despised may be sometimes obtained within sight of the great metropolis itself.—*Live Stock Journal*.

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CHAPTER XV.—A MAN OVERBOARD.



CAPTAIN hesitated, and then said—

"Voyages are always dangerous—that's all."

"He means more than he says," thought the doctor; and he followed the captain with his eyes as he went forward, stopped, and spoke a few words to Hester and Mr. Parkley, who were still sitting together, and then joined Dutch, who was, according to

his wont, gazing over the bulwark far out to sea.

"Pugh," he said, holding out his cigar case, for several of the men were standing about, and he thought it better not to seem to be making a communication, "I've got something on my mind, and of all the men on board you are the one I have chosen to make my confidant."

Dutch's eyes brightened, and he turned to the captain eagerly.

"What can I do?" he asked.

"Nothing—only listen. Perhaps this is only a mare's nest; but I've had so much to do with men, that I am rather a keen observer."

"Is there any danger—anything wrong?" exclaimed Dutch, glancing involuntarily towards his wife.

"Danger or no danger," replied the captain, "life is very uncertain, and, if you will excuse me for saying it, I don't think you would like to die or see her die"—he nodded in the direction of the spot where Hester was sitting—"without clasping hands once more."

Dutch turned pale as ashes, and closed his eyes for a few moments; then turning an angry look upon the captain, he exclaimed—

"You have no right to intrude in this way upon my private feelings, Captain Studwick."

"Not, perhaps, between man and man, Pugh; but I speak as one who would give all he has to recall his poor wife, who died while he was at sea, after parting from her in anger."

"For heaven's sake, be silent!" panted Dutch, grasping his arm.

"She looks, poor little woman," continued the captain, paying no heed to his appeal, "as if a few weeks' neglect from you will kill her."

"I cannot, I will not listen to you," said Dutch, hoarsely, and with the veins in his temples swelling.

"I will say no more about that, then," said the captain, "but confide to you what I wish to say."

"Go on."

"Well, I may be wrong, but I have been trying to think it out ever since we started, and I have said nothing to Parkley because I am so uncertain."

"I do not understand you," said Dutch, looking at him curiously.

"I hardly understand myself," replied the captain; "but I will try to explain. In the first place, you or we have made a deadly enemy in our Cuban acquaintance."

"Undoubtedly," exclaimed Dutch.

"One who would do anything to serve his ends—to stop us from getting to the place Oakum professes to know."

"I am sure he would."

"He would stop us at any cost."

"If he could; but we were too quick for him, and he has not stopped us."

"That's what troubles me."

"How troubles you? Why should that cause uneasiness?" said Dutch.

"Because he strikes me as being a man of such diabolical ingenuity that he would have found, if he had wished, some means of circumventing us before we started; and hence, as you know, I have carefully scanned every ship we neared, or steamer that passed us."

"Yes, I know all that," said Dutch, growing excited; "but we have been too much for him."

"I fear not," said Captain Studwick.

"Then you think we are in danger from him still?"

"I do, and that he would not stop at murder, or sinking the ship to gain his ends."

"I believe not," said Dutch, moodily. "But you have found out something?"

"Not yet."

"You know of something, then, for certain?"

"Not yet."

"Speak, man," exclaimed Dutch, impatiently. "You torture me with your riddles. What is it you think?"

"Don't speak so loud," said the captain; "and don't look round and start when I tell you, but smoke quietly, and seem like me—watching those bonito playing below."

Dutch nodded.

"Go on," he said, in a low voice.

"I will explain, then," said the captain. "But first

I believe this: we have not been stopped or overtaken by Lauré, because—

"Because what?"

"We have the danger we shunned here on board."

In spite of the feelings that had troubled him, the deep, fervent love for his wife asserted itself at the words of Captain Studwick, and Dutch Pugh made a step in her direction, as if to be ready to protect her from harm, before he recollected himself, and recalled that there could be no immediate danger.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed then, eagerly.

"That's a larger one than I've seen yet," said the captain, pointing with his cigar down into the clear water. "Oakum, ask Mr. Jones to get up the grains, and let any of the men who like try to strike a few of the fish."

"Ay, ay, sir," exclaimed Oakum.

"Didn't I warn you to be quiet?" said the captain. "Our safety and success depend on keeping our enemy in ignorance that we suspect him."

"I beg pardon," said Dutch, taking his double-glass from its case, adjusting it, and watching the fish play about; by its help seeing them swimming together, rising, diving, and chasing one another through the water, which was of all shades, from the faintest aquamarine and pale turquoise to the richest, deepest sapphire blue. "I am impulsive; but I will control myself. Go on. Whom do you suspect?"

"That Cuban, of course."

"But he is two thousand miles away."

"Possibly; but his influence is with us."

"What do you suspect, then?"

"There's a much finer one still," cried the captain, pointing to an albicore, which kept pace exactly with the schooner, as she careened over to the soft breeze and surged through the sparkling water. "No one."

"Yes, I see him," said Dutch, aloud. "But you think that Lauré has emissaries on board?"

"May be yes, may be no. Lend me your glass, Mr. Pugh. Thanks."

"Pray be a little more explicit. What do you think, then?"

"I hope they will strike a few of these fellows," said the captain, returning the glass. "I can get on better without it, thank you. Look here, Pugh," he said, in a lower tone, "I am all suspicion, and no certainty. One thing is certain—those treasures have an existence: the Cuban's acts prove that, and he will never let us get the spoil if he can prevent it. The colours of those fish are magnificent," he said, aloud, as the mulatto limped by. "The ladies ought to come and look at them. Every act of that man," he continued, "that I saw, proved him to be a fellow of marvellous resource and ingenuity."

"Yes," said Dutch, nodding, with his eyes to the binocular.

"And unscrupulous to a degree."

Dutch nodded again.

"If the *Wave* was a steamer, instead of a fast three-masted schooner, it's my impression that we should have gone to the bottom before now."

"How? Why?"

"He would have had a few sham lumps of coal conveyed into the bunkers—hollow pieces of cast-iron, full of powder or dynamite; one or two would have been thrown into the furnace in firing, and the poor vessel would have had a hole blown in her, and gone to the bottom before we knew what was the matter."

"Diabolical!" exclaimed Dutch below his breath.

"Oh, here is the grain," said the captain, as Oakum came along with an implement something like an eel spear, or the trident Neptune is represented as carrying, except that in this case, instead of three, it was furnished with five sharp barbed teeth, and a thin, strong cord was attached to the middle of the shaft. "Would you like to try?" he continued, turning to Tonio, who stood close at hand.

"Yes, I'll try," said the mulatto, in a guttural voice.

"Let him have the grain, Oakum," said the captain, to the great disappointment of several of the men. "These fellows are, some of them, very clever this way."

The mulatto eagerly took the spear, fastened the cord around his wrist, and, followed by several of the men, went forward to the bowsprit, climbed out, and, descending, stood bare-footed on one of the stays, bending down with the weapon poised ready to dart it at the first likely fish that came within range.

"I am all impatient to hear more," said Dutch, still watching the fish that played about in the blue water.

"And I am all impatient to find out more," said the captain; "but we must be patient."

"Then you know nothing?"

"Nothing whatever. I only feel sure that the Cuban is at work, trying to checkmate us; and, of course, I suspect. Now, I want your help."

"Of course," replied Dutch, both speaking more freely, for the attention of all was taken up now with the scene being enacted in the bows of the swift craft. "I feel sure that you must be right; but I have had so much to think of that these things did not trouble me. He must have started, and will get there before us."

"I don't think that possible," said the captain; "but I have thought so."

"But suppose that he has some of his men on board, scoundrels in his own pay."

"That is far more likely," said the captain; "and that is why I am so careful."

"Of course, that must be it," exclaimed Dutch. "The villain! He bribed your crew to desert, and has supplied others—his own miscreants."

"That is one thing I suspect."

"That last party there—the mulatto and the black."

"That is the most natural supposition at the first blush; but the men are all strangers, and for this very reason I am half disposed to think that it was the first lot. One is so disposed to judge wrongly."

"You are right," said Dutch, thoughtfully; "and we have no common plotter to deal with. You remember the man who wanted to hide an important letter from the French spies?"

"No," said the captain, watching him intently. "What did he do?"

"He placed the letter somewhere so as they should not find it, knowing full well that they would come and ransack his chambers as soon as his back was turned."

"Well?" said the captain, impatiently.

"Well, the spies of the police came; and, in his absence, searched the place in every direction, even trying the legs of the chairs and tables to see if the document was rolled up and plugged in one of them; but they gave up in despair, finding nothing."

"Where was it hidden, then?" said the captain.

"It was not hidden at all," said Dutch, smiling. "The owner came back at last, after having been waylaid and searched, even to the linings of his clothes; and then, feeling secure, took the letter from where he had placed it, the French police fearing that it must be in other hands."

"But where was it?" said the captain again.

"Just where he left it: in a common envelope, plain for everybody to see, just stuck half-behind the looking-glass over the mantelpiece, and had probably been in the searchers' hands half a dozen times."

"That is just the trick that the Cuban will try with us," exclaimed the captain.

"I think so," said Dutch; "otherwise one might look upon that mulatto as a suspicious character."

"Yes, of course," replied the captain. "I was ready to pitch upon him at first, but I changed my mind, and am more disposed to suspect those two quiet English fellows, Lennie and Rolls, the men Oakum was talking to some time back."

"I know," said Dutch. "One of them is a dark fellow, with an outrageous cast in his eye."

"In both his eyes, you mean," said the captain. "That is Rolls. The other fellow seems as thick-headed and stupid as an ox. He has a perennial grin on his face, and looks simplicity itself. Those two were——"

"I know the men," said Dutch. "But now what do you propose to do?"

"Nothing but wait. I had thought of putting the others on their guard; but by doing so I might defeat my own ends. Perhaps, after all, I am wrong, and we shall never hear more of Master Lauré, except, if we are successful, he may attack you by law for a share."

"But you could take precautions," exclaimed Dutch, who again glanced involuntarily at his wife—she sat there watching him in a sad appealing way that went to his heart.

"Every precaution with respect to the arms, which I always keep under lock and key. And now, what I want you to do is to keep about at all times, night or day, as the chance may serve, picking up such facts as you come across, and communicating them to me; while, for my part, I shall keep every possible stitch of canvas set, and reach the place as soon as I can."

"For it may turn out a false alarm," said Dutch.

"I trust it may; but I feel sure it will not," replied the captain.

"I'm afraid I must agree with you," said Dutch.

"Depend upon it, there is some deeply-laid plot ready to be sprung upon us. However, forewarned——"

"Man overboard! Man overboard!" shouted half a dozen voices in chorus; and directly after, Mr. Jones, the mate, was heard to cry hoarsely to the man at the wheel—

"Hard down, my lad, hard down; steady, my lads. Quick to those braces—'bout ship."

"Here, four of you lower down this boat," cried the captain, as excitedly as the rest, for the fact was plain enough for comprehension. Tonio, the mulatto, had been darting his spear with more or less success at the bonito, and had at last sent it down with such precision in the back of a large fish that he had buried it far beyond the barbs, when his prey made a tremendous rush, gave the cord a violent jerk, and, being attached to the thrower's wrist, it literally snatched him from his precarious position, and, in spite of his being a good swimmer, he was rapidly being drowned by the frantic efforts of the fish.

Dutch saw in an instant that long before the boat could be lowered the man would be exhausted, unless he was freed from the cord that jerked at his wrist as he swam, and by means of which he was dragged again and again beneath the water. There was no time for thought: a fellow-creature was in deadly peril, and he felt that he could give help, so, throwing off the loose jacket he wore, and kicking off his shoes, he took out and opened his knife, and climbed on the bulwarks. As he did so, he caught a glimpse of Hester tottering with outspread arms towards him, and heard her wail his name, but as he did so he was leaping from the schooner's side to plunge deep down in the bright water, sending the shoal of bonito flying in all directions as his body formed a curve, and he came up twenty feet from where he had dipped, and then began swimming hastily towards the drowning man.

A loud cheer saluted him as he turned on his side and swam on, as the preparations for lowering the boat went on, with the schooner becoming each instant more distant, while it soon became evident with him that unless something unforeseen occurred the mulatto must be drowned; for, in spite of all Dutch's efforts, the fish took him farther and farther away, the man's struggles, as he rose on the long swell of the Atlantic, growing evidently feebler and feebler, till in its frantic dread and pain the fish suddenly turned, bending back for where Dutch, with long slow strokes, urged himself rapidly through the water.

He hardly knew how it happened, for as he made a dash to cut off the pain-maddened creature, it leaped over him, dived down, and, to his horror, Dutch found that the rope was over his body, and that he was being towed rapidly down into the awful depths of the ocean. The light above him seemed to be dimmed, and he half lost consciousness. Then, with one vigorous application of the knife, he was free, and a few kicks brought him breathless to the surface, where, as he panted, he paddled about looking for the mulatto, and had almost given him up, when he rose up slowly to

the surface, and one hand appeared clutching vainly at the air.

Half a dozen strokes took Dutch to his side, and, catching the drowning man's wrist, Dutch turned him over, and tried to get behind him. But he was not quick enough; for in the strong desire for life, the mulatto, as soon as he was touched, clasped the swimmer with arms and legs, completely crippling him, and, after a brief struggle, they sank together.

As they rose once more, Dutch saw that the boat was quite two hundred yards away, and that his case was hopeless, unless he took some high-handed manner of saving himself; so, turning as well as he could, he struck the drowning man a tremendous blow with his doubled fist upon the temple, stunning him effectually; his clasp loosened, and, shaking himself free, Dutch now turned him on his back, floating by his side as he sustained him, till, with a loud hurrah echoed from the schooner, which was now coming down upon them hand-over-hand, the pair were dragged into the boat, and soon after lay in safety upon the deck of the schooner.

The first upon whom Dutch's eyes fell was his wife, kneeling by his side; and, as their eyes met, she took his hand, trembling, and raised it to her lips, her quivering lips seeming inaudibly to say—

"Don't repulse me. I love you so dearly, and so well."

The next moment Bessy was leading her away, and, after swallowing a glass of stimulant handed to him by the doctor, Dutch rose, went below and changed, to return, little the worse for his immersion, to find that the doctor had succeeded in restoring the mulatto to consciousness, while Dutch himself was received with a hearty cheer.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE SILENT SEA.

THE schooner sped on, and nothing troublous disturbed the progress of the voyage as the days glided by. So free from suspicion was everything on board, that the captain was beginning to be lulled into a sense of security, and a change had come over Pugh.

A reconciliation had not taken place between him and Hester; but he did not avoid her now, but in a quiet, stern way watched over her, attended her as she struggled back to health under the unremitting charge of the doctor; and her lips daily grew less pale, as the light of hope began once more to shine in her liquid eyes.

The routine of the ship went on in a regular way, and the men smoked and idled as they entered the tropics, and neared the object of the voyage. The doctor made himself specially agreeable to Sam Oakum, chatted with him, gave him cigars, which Sam cut up and chewed, ending by talking about John Studwick; at which Sam winked to himself, as he thought that the doctor would not have taken so much interest in the case if it had not been for the sister. Then, to use Oakum's own words, Mr. Wilson would "come and fold his back," so as to lean his elbows on the bulwarks, and chatter about his birds and the natural history objects Sam had seen in his travels—that worthy not forgetting to shoot the birds he described with the long bow; and all the while Mr. Wilson, who was an exceedingly meek

individual, would be smoothing his light, towey hair, which the winds blew about, altering the set of his tie and collar, and brushing the specks off his clothes.

"He's a poor, weak, soft Tommy sort of a chap," said Sam to himself, as he watched him out of one corner of his eye, and saw that he was constantly on the look-out to see if Bessy Studwick came up on deck, content to watch her from a distance, for her brother had taken quite an antipathy to him.

"Heigho!" he'd sigh, as he shook his head and gazed down at the water, as if wondering whether he had not better emulate Dutch's plunge, and not come up again. "Heigho! this is a strange world, Mr. Oakum."

"It's a rum un, sir, all round, and always was. But, I say, sir, it's easy to see what's the matter with you."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense, Mr. Oakum!" said the tall fellow, blushing like a girl.

"It's only natur', sir," said Sam, sympathetically, as he gave a good twist to his quid, and winked at one of the blacks. "It aint nothin' to be ashamed on."

"Ah, Mr. Oakum, I wish I was in such favour as you are over yonder."

"You would not like to pay the cost, sir, I know."

"Pay the cost, Mr. Oakum, what do you mean?"

"It's only we ugly ones as enjoys these privileges with the fair sect. You wouldn't like to be old and ugly like me, to be talked to as I am."

"Ah, Mr. Oakum, I would be her dog if she would be fond of me—or a bird," he said, enthusiastically.

"Ah, if I had only thought of it before I started."

"Thought o' what, sir?" said Sam, winking at the black again.

"Of bringing a few canaries. They are such nice presents to give a lady."

"Do you want to send a present to her, sir?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Oakum."

"Well, sir, if I were in love with a lady, and wanted—"

"Oh, hush! Mr. Oakum."

"Wanted, I says, to find her a present, I shouldn't send whistling canaries, but a pair o' cooing doves."

The young naturalist looked at old Oakum, as if he wished to penetrate his inmost thoughts; but the old sailor never flinched, looking as serious as a judge outside, but laughing heartily within at the other's expense.

"I will," he exclaimed; and hurrying away he was busy the rest of the day, painting up one of his old cages, in which he placed a pair of doves, and called the old sailor down to him in the evening.

"Take those to Miss Studwick, Mr. Oakum, with my compliments, and—er—by the way—er—you would not feel offended if I offered you half a crown to buy tobacco?"

"Not in the least, sir," exclaimed Oakum, earnestly. "I'd do owt to oblige you."

"Take them directly, then," he exclaimed; and, with the two soft-plumaged birds sitting close together as the old fellow swung the cage, the present was taken to where Bessy Studwick sat by the side of her brother, reading to him on deck.

Oakum was gone some time, and meanwhile poor

Wilson fidgeted about amongst his birds, hardly able to bear the suspense, turning first red and then pale, as Oakum came back, cage in hand, and set it down before him.

"Miss Studwick says she's werry much obliged to you, sir," said Sam; "but she can't werry well keep the birds, as Mr. John thinks as they'd be too much for him to bear when they took to cooing."

"It don't matter, Oakum—set them down," he said, huskily, with his back turned to the old sailor. "I only thought the birds might amuse them, as Mr. John is so ill. Dick, Dick, pretty Dick," he said first to one bird and then to another, to hide his confusion. "Come, little tame bird—come, Jenny," he continued, opening one of the cage doors, when a pretty little red-poll came hopping down from one perch to the other, and then stood at the door looking out, with its head first on one side then on the other, and its little beady eyes directed first at Oakum, then at its master.

"Why, bless its little heart, it looks as knowing as a Christian," said the old sailor. "Why didn't you send that one, sir? That would have pleased the young lady, and would have made no noise."

Wilson shook his head as he held out his finger, and the bird uttered a loud twitter and flew to him, sitting on its living perch, and then, ruffling its throat and crest, jerked out its little song, suffering itself afterwards to be stroked, and ending by picking a crumb from the naturalist's mouth, and then flitting back to the cage in which it was daily shut up.

But all of the birds were more or less tame, being ready to peck at the young man's fingers; and a robin, setting up his feathers and making a playful attack as it fluttered its wings, and pecked, and fought, ended by hopping on its perch, and bursting into a triumphant song, as if it had conquered some fierce rival.

"I wonder how many of them 'll live in a foreign country, sir, when you gets 'em there," said Oakum.

"Well, not all," said Mr. Wilson; "but many of them. Mind the paint on that cage, Mr. Oakum. I'm so much obliged. Er—you won't take any notice about that cage and the birds? Not that it matters, only Mr. Meldon or Mr. Parkley might laugh, perhaps."

"Not I, sir. You may trust me," growled Sam.

"Some people have a habit of laughing at natural history, you know, er—er—because they don't understand."

"You may trust me, sir," exclaimed the old fellow, as he went up the steps; and then to himself, "Yes, some folks has a habit of laughing at that kind o' nat'ral history when they see it. For only to think of a thin, wobbling chap fancying as our Miss Bessy would take up with the likes o' he. Hah! it's a curus thing this love, and them as has got spliced don't allus seem to hit."

He went on deck, to find Bessy Studwick still reading to her brother; and her voice sounded so hoarse that the old fellow trotted to the steward's pantry for a glass of water and a couple of lumps of sugar, squeezing in afterwards the two halves of a lemon, bearing the drink himself to where John Studwick lay back, gazing at the setting sun, his

face lit up with a calm, placid smile; and, though his sister read on, he evidently hardly heard a word that was read.

He started slightly as Oakum came up with the tumbler.

"What is it?" he said, harshly. "Has that Mr. Meldon sent me more medicine? I will not take it."

Bessy Studwick must have turned her face more to the setting sun, for her cheeks grew crimson at her brother's words; and seeing this, he looked at her angrily.

"Lor' bless your 'art, no, sir," said Oakum. "I thought you and our young lady here might be a bit thirsty after so much book, so I brought you some lemonade."

They gave him a grateful look, each thanking him for the attention to the other, and as he walked back with the empty glass, Mr. Meldon, who was standing talking to Hester Pugh and Mr. Parkley, turned, sighed to himself, and looked after the old man with a feeling of envy.

"If I had paid that little attention," he thought, "it would have been refused with some harsh remark. Poor fellow! even though he's her brother, I do not wonder at his feeling jealous of every look."

Days of sailing over bright, sun-flecked seas, evenings of gorgeous sunsets, and nights of black violet skies, with the great stars sparkling overhead, and reflected in myriads on the smooth surface of the wondrous phosphorescent sea, all aglow with pale fire wherever fish darted, while the schooner's bows seemed plunging through foaming, liquid moonbeams. Mornings with such wondrous tints of orange and scarlet, crimson and gold, that those who gazed upon them did so in awe of the mighty works of the grand world. Then came heat so intense that the brass rails were unbearable, the pitch oozed from the seams, and the passengers lay panting beneath the awning spread aft, and longing for the evening breeze.

Now and then the cocoa-nut-fringed islands were seen, but no stoppage was made; for, on consideration, it was decided that such a step might afford the Cuban a clue to their whereabouts, while now both Captain Studwick and Dutch felt satisfied that their suspicions had been without foundation—that they had indeed eluded him, and all they had to do now was to make the best of their way to the treasure sea, and secure their prizes.

So southward and westward went the schooner, past reef, key, and island towards the El Dorado of their hopes; the two invalids much better; in fact, Hester's colour had been pretty well restored, and all she waited for was the day when her golden hopes would be realized—not those of finding ingot or bar long buried in the sea, but the restoration, complete and full, of her husband's love and trust.

The Caribbean Sea had long been entered, and its sheltering chain of islands left behind; and now, with Oakum in consultation with the captain, the vessel's course was altered to due south, with the result that one evening, after gradually creeping along the forest-clad coast of Venezuela, and land that seemed almost weird in its silence and wild gran-

deur, anchor was cast for the night, for the voyage was almost at an end.

A long debate took place that night, in which Oakum and the black took part, the result being eminently satisfactory to Mr. Parkley and Dutch, for both the above spoke positively as to their being now within certainly a mile east or west of the spot where one of the wrecks could be found.

"I don't say, you know, as I've put the schooner right on the spot; but she's here close, and we must out boats and cruise about, looking down through the water, which is as clear as glass, till we get right, and then we can sail or tow her up."

As the stars came out, and the adventurers stood by the bulwarks, gazing at the thick black wall of forest beyond the rocks and white sand, where the waves broke in lines of phosphorescent gold, they could easily understand how it was that these treasures had lain untouched so long. For here the beast of the forest had sole dominion; and even the Indians of the country showed no sign of ever visiting the grand solitudes. All seemed as nature had left it when her handiwork was at an end; and, driven by some furious hurricane upon one or other of the rocks that abounded, a ship would fill and sink, and be forgotten.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 212.)

After Caribou.

IT was in the month of March, not long ago, when I had my first adventure with caribou; for it is considered that in that month it is easier to kill the Canadian deer, as they are unable to run upon the crust which forms on the snow at that time of the year, but break through it, and are thus impeded in their course, and become an easy prey to the hunter. It was in true chasseur style that we started from the city of Quebec in our search of the caribou.

It was not a numerous party, but consisted of myself and friend, whose name for all purposes in these presents shall be Edward Wilks. Like myself, he had never before experienced the adventure of a caribou hunt, although we had often been together on a fishing expedition in the winter, and had hutted and tented alongside many a lake and stream, and set our night lines and caught numberless trout and 'luniges of fabulous weight.

Often had we sat together in the evening in our temporary habitations, fatigued and drowsy after our day's amusement, talking over the chances of success, and calculating the best localities for the morrow. Many a mile had we trudged together along desolate roads, dragging our laden *traineaux*, sometimes weary, but always with joy and happiness at our hearts; for in the country, be it summer or winter, there is always in the air an exhilaration which excludes the possibility of that ennui which in the crowded city often oppresses one.

We started from Quebec on foot, each having an Indian *traineau* packed with our rifles, ammunition, provisions, and blankets. Our provisions consisted of tea, sugar, flour, biscuit, salt pork, salt, and a few other articles; for in the brush one's difficulty is not

appetite, except in the way of quantity, and that is often a matter of surprise. The unusual exercise, the bracing atmosphere, both combine to render one voracious.

Our road lay to the westward, to lakes in the rear of Valcartier, about thirty miles distant from Quebec. Our start was made in the early morning, and we tramped steadily onward at the rate of three miles an hour, and did not make a stoppage till about twelve o'clock, when we halted at an hotel to partake of our *mit iag mahl*, and have an hour's rest.

Again we started, with renewed vigour, and reached the further part of Valcartier in the afternoon, and found two Indians, whom we had engaged in town to perform the hard work of camp life. They lived in miserable little shanties about twelve feet square, possessing in front a window and a door, and another window on one side. These buildings were within a short distance of each other, and were situated at the foot of a mountain. The Indians were both married men; but we saw neither squaw nor papoose, as we did not enter the abodes; for the atmosphere of such dwellings is generally far from pleasant or wholesome. They did not take long in making their preparations; in fact, they seemed to me not to take more than a blanket apiece and some tobacco, and, of course, their rifles and ammunition, which they placed on the *traineaux*. The latter they immediately took charge of, and we were not at all sorry to deliver them up, for our long tramp had rendered their weight a sore trial of endurance.

Our Indians were good specimens of the race, belonging to the Huron tribe, which occupies the Indian village of Lorette. Sioui, the elder one, was a noted chasseur, about fifty years of age, of a dark copper colour, thin and slightly bent, caused, I presume, by the habit of carrying provisions on his back. His eyes were dark and quick, and he had no whiskers or any hairy ornament about his face. The other man, Gros Louis, was about forty, nearly as dark as the other, and of stouter build. Their chief occupation was either hunting for themselves or acting as guides to others. They sometimes also acted as assistants to surveying parties, in which work they are of great utility.

As we trudged along they spoke of the many hunting expeditions they had joined, of the countless moose and caribou that had fallen victims to their unerring rifles; but they invariably wound up by saying that the deer were year by year getting more scarce, that in a few years there would be none to kill, and that the Indians would have to move farther north. Sioui and Gros Louis were the most inveterate smokers I ever met. From the time we left their huts to the time we reached the camping ground, their pipes were ever lit. It was near the edge of the lake, whose flat, snow-covered surface stretched outward for the distance of about eight miles, and was nearly three miles broad. Its borders were fringed with trees of fir, birch, and maple, the latter two now bare and stripped of their leaves. High mountains completely surrounded the lake, and were clothed to their summit with forest trees.

Our camp was a hut which had been built by former hunters, a log hut of about twelve feet square, and fortunately contained a stove, and the floor was strewn with dried fir branches, and the remnants of utensils left by its quondam occupants. Our chasseurs soon gathered sufficient wood to have a fire going, and then proceeded to lop off some fresh fir branches, and cut more firewood. Rapidly and scientifically did these Indians do their work. They unloaded our *traineaux*, placed the rifles and ammunition in safe positions, piled away the provisions, laid out our blankets, arranged the cooking utensils, procured water, and soon had a kettle of boiling water, when we quickly had a bowl of good whiskey punch—a reward for our long tramp. We had, however, to keep a good look-out after our cellar-supply, for both our guides were well known as famous liquor consumers. Sioui, on our arrival, had placed a couple of lines in the lake, and, by the time tea was being prepared, had caught a fine trout of over three pounds weight, which, with the pork and other adjuncts, formed a most hunger-satisfying meal; after which, a quiet smoke and a voyage of discovery concluded the day's experience, and, like quaint old Samuel Pepys, "so to bed."

It was about daybreak when I felt myself pushed by the shoulder, and Sioui, my special assistant, whispered in my ear the magical word "Caribou!" In his hand he had my rifle. I quickly got up and followed him out of the hut, taking my rifle from him, he bringing his own. Gros Louis and Edward were still asleep. Sioui stepped rapidly onward towards the lake, and when we reached a large birch tree, pointed out to the lake. At the distance of about forty feet were two caribou. In a twinkling I had my rifle to my shoulder, sighted my victim, and fired. With a bound in the air he fell on the ice. Sioui immediately handed me his rifle and I fired at the other caribou, which, on the fall of the first, had started off to the opposite shore at a rapid pace. He stumbled, but immediately arose and continued his course. I was about to follow, but Sioui said it was useless, that it would be impossible to overtake him, that he was wounded, and we would track him after breakfast. The report of the rifles had awakened Edward and Gros Louis, who came running towards us, to find out what was the cause. Of course, there was a little disappointment and recrimination, but this was soon forgotten in the excitement of going for the dead caribou. He was a splendid buck, with heavy antlers. Very artistically was he skinned and cut up, and brought to the camping ground and hung up; and very delicious was his cooked flesh at breakfast, with the addition of some fresh trout, taken by our night lines. We began to feel the fascination of forest life, an unaccustomed elasticity of spirits, an unaccountable vigour in our nerves and muscles.

It was a new life, and our breakfast would have astonished the denizens of the city. There seemed to be no end of the quantity which was required to satisfy our hunger, and yet there was no sensation of surfeit. After finishing breakfast, and leaving Gros Louis to look after the camp, Edward and I, with our guide Sioui, started off on snow-shoes after the wounded caribou. We very quickly found his

track, which was marked with blood, ratifying the assertion of Sioui that I had wounded him. We crossed the lake and reached the other shore, but had not proceeded far when we found the poor animal lying exhausted on the snow. Sioui gave him the *coup de grâce*, and afterwards skinned and quartered him. We then returned to the camp, and Sioui recrossed the lake with a *traineau*, and brought back our game. By the time it was properly hung dinner time had arrived, and we had so congratulated ourselves on our success that we decided not to seek for further slaughter that day, but rather to reserve our strength for the following. After dinner, and a lazy smoke as a concomitant, Wilks and myself, leaving the two Indians idly enjoying their pipes in the camp, strolled off with fowling-pieces, for we had been told that ptarmigans might be found. Our hut was erected in the midst of a wood containing birch, beech, maple, and such trees, and there were clumps of those trees in different places.

We had not proceeded far when we came across a covey of ptarmigans, and on our discharging our four barrels among them we found fifteen birds to be bagged. There was no disputing that so far we were lucky in our hunt; and even our return to camp was not without its trophy, for we shot five hares, whose bodies almost escaped our notice till we were within almost striking distance. They were large and fat, and weighed heavily in our game-bags with the ptarmigans; but we brought them safely to our hut among the fir and birch branches, and Sioui and Gros Louis, aided by our scientific knowledge as regards cooking and a personal acquaintance with Soyer in the Crimea, soon produced a supper worthy of a king.

Let Athens talk as he pleases of the suppers of the ancient Greeks; but what could he have better than the broiled steak of caribou, glorious hare soup, the freshest of boiled trout, the rarest of ptarmigan, with all the *et cetera*, including real Lord Lieutenant's whiskey with white sugar and lemon; and all these served up by the wild Indian, amidst the primeval forests of Canada, and on the shores of a lake whose beauties in summer are unrivalled? Horace, even in the Palace of Mæcenas, delicately nibbling peacock pie and sipping the choicest Chian or Falernian wine, could not have more enjoyed himself than did we on the shore of the nameless lake in the parish of Valcartier.

It might have been that success had intoxicated us, or it might have been that the unusual exercise had overtaxed us, or that the famous Lord Lieutenant's liquid had induced prolonged somnolency; but, *n'importe*, we found next morning that early rising was a mistaken idea, and that bed even of fir branches was a luxury. Our Indian friends were, however, on the *qui vive*, and breakfast was ready ere we were awake.

We felt like pashas when the representatives of the forest, the descendants of Donnacona, the great chief of Stadacona, brought us fish, flesh, and fowl—trout, caribou, and ptarmigan—taken from their hunting-grounds, and cooked in chasseur style, and waited on us with more respect than they would have shown to their illustrious predecessor.

But breakfast cannot last for ever, and, putting

everything in order, we started off on snow-shoes, accompanied by Sioui and Gros Louis, to try our luck again. We crossed the lake to the other side, and struck up the mountain side, now and then coming upon a small clearing; but it was dreadful work climbing up the mountain steeps, clambering over fallen trees, avoiding hanging branches, stepping over mountain rivulets, and passing over deep gorges and ravines. Steadily onward and upward we proceeded, surmounting difficulties to encounter fresh ones; but without a reward for our toil. We gained the summit of the mountain, and descended on the other side, and the descent seemed as difficult as the ascent, and sometimes even more dangerous, for a slip might give one an impetus which might hurl one to destruction. No tracks were found on the mountain, so we proceeded farther on, till we reached the base of a second, and walked round it without meeting with success.

The caribou had retired, leaving behind them no trace or mark; the death of their fellows had banished them from the country, and they retreated before us. So the Indians had decided; and as it was well on in the day, and we were many miles from camp, we made up our minds to abandon the chase, to avoid being caught in the woods without food and shelter. So, somewhat disappointed, we commenced our return, but by no means up the sides of the almost inaccessible mountain. The longest way round was in this case, without doubt, the shortest way home, and even that shortest way was filled with difficulties. Huge fallen trees continually barred our way, immense drifts of snow buried us in their depths, and low branches and thick bushes impeded our path. But we had no mountain to climb, and that was something to be thankful for, as, laden with our rifles and ammunition, it was extremely difficult on snow-shoes to overcome a declivity far steeper than forty-five degrees; in fact, sometimes so much so that we were obliged to haul ourselves up by the bushes and branches.

On reaching camp we gladly threw ourselves on the grateful couch of fir branches, and lazily watched our Hurons preparing supper. It was a repetition of the breakfast, and was done full justice to. On the morrow we started early before breakfast, which we procured at a farmer's house in Valcartier, where we settled with Sioui and Gros Louis, and relieved them of the laden *traineaux*, laden with a sufficiently satisfactory spoil—two caribou, eight and a half brace of ptarmigan, six dozen of trout, and seven hares—the Indians having increased our bag of ptarmigan.

From the farmer in whose house we breakfasted we learned that two bears had been shot in the vicinity on the previous day, and had been taken into town for sale. We engaged a man with his berlin, an open wooden box on runners, to take us to town. Into this berlin we stowed our game, and packed our firearms and ammunition and what was left of our stock, and on the top of all placed ourselves, well wrapped up in buffalo robes. Our driver was a young lad who seemed to be of no conversational turn, for his sole utterances were "Get up,

Bess;" and certainly Bess did her best to "get up," for we arrived in Quebec in an incredibly short space of time, and surprised our friends and disappointed our enemies by our success. It was the first time we had been out caribou hunting, but it shall not be the last.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XLI.—WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH.

FOR a good hour together Mr. Jarker would rest in a broken-bottomed chair, smoking a short black pipe, his hands supporting his heavy chin, and his elbows making pits in his knees, as, like some hideous old cathedral gargoyle, he sat gazing fixedly at the little wondering face of the child. From time to time he reversed his position, to refresh himself with a draught of his favourite beverage—gin and beer—a beverage which always produced a loud smack from his thick negro lips. If there was no fascination in the child's face for Bill Jarker, there was certainly fascination in the ruffian's face for the child; and, unconsciously imitating his attitude, it would rest its dimply plump cheeks upon its tiny fists, and gaze again wonderingly, without a thought of moving, till the lids slowly sank over the violet eyes, and the little golden-haired, soft, lovable head sank sideways, with all those prettiest of pretty motions seen in one of the most beautiful sights in nature—a child dropping off into its simple, trusting sleep of innocence; but soon it would start into wakefulness again, with a frightened air, and its little face drawn and ready to cry; but a glance at the hideous face before it subdued the disposition, and once more the same long, weary gaze commenced.

This took place day after day, and a stranger seeing it might have fancied that in this case innocence was exercising its power over guilt; but one who knew Mr. Jarker well would have arrived at the right idea—namely, that this gentleman was making his plans. A pipe or two of tobacco, a pint of beer strengthened with gin, and a long stare at the face of his wife when living, a cat, a dog, or, of late, the child, had been the preliminaries of more than one desperate burglary in a country place somewhere within a circle of fifty miles' radius, taking St. Paul's as the centre. Bill's *confrères* in the birdcatching profession contented themselves with trips countryward to the extent of eight or ten miles; but, though on the whole Bill and his two or three companions caught fewer birds, he never let distance interfere with his pursuits, and used to boast that the birds he netted were of a rarer kind. Bill would travel third-class almost any distance to find good pitches for his nets; and even then, perhaps, after a three or four days' trip, and returning with hardly a bird, he seemed to be so infatuated with the place and its prospects that he would gather together his two or three intimates, and go down again, travelling slowly by road, setting off, too, in such a hurry, in a miserable cart drawn by a wretched-looking hack, that friends and self would entirely forget nets and call-birds, when they would console themselves with the remark that they might take a few nightingales.

So that Mr. Jarker was not undergoing a softening process as he sat staring at the child, for he was really making his plans; and this time these plans had nothing to do with either birds or nocturnal visits. There was something particular in Mr. Jarker's head, or else he would not have burdened himself with the child for a single day, while he had carefully retained it in his custody now for many weeks; and the ruffian's ideas must have been of a somewhat strange character, for now and then he would shake his head at the drowsy child, and say—

"Yes, my little chickin', you do for a bait."

So of late, apparently for the sake of the child, Mr. Jarker had suffered the bellows; and, in consideration of a small sum weekly, Mrs. Sims had sniffed about the room, and, to use her own expressive words, "done for him." But now, probably from too much spiritual exercise, Mrs. Sims was ill, and no one dared go near the ruffian's room but Lucy, whose heart bled for the little thing. Left still for hours together alone in the dreary room, sometimes but half fed, afraid to do more than whimper softly, her sole amusement was to press her little face against the closed window, and watch until she could catch a glimpse of her neighbour, when the tiny hands would be clapped with glee. The neighbours said it was a shame; but they had their own affairs to attend to—and said no more. While, as might be expected, Lucy seized every opportunity of tending the child most lovingly; watching for Jarker's absence, and then hurrying up and spending perhaps an hour in the miserable attic.

"She must be ill," Lucy would think, "or something is wrong; for surely it was fancy on her part that he should wish to retain the child;" and, though anxious that it should be better tended, she looked with dread to the time when it should be taken away, while as anxiously she watched for a visit from Agnes. Night after night the candle burned in the window, as she worked on at some exercise; but Agnes Hardon came not, telling her weary heart that it was for Lucy's good.

Sometimes Jarker would omit to turn the key he always left in the door, as if to provoke inquiry into his affairs, and to show the guilelessness of his life; and then, after waiting until his footstep became inaudible, the child would steal softly down step by step, fleeing back if she heard a door open or a foot upon the stairs, but only to persevere till, unobserved, she reached the entrance, when, watching till the attention of the children of the court was directed elsewhere, she would dart across the pavement, enter the opposite house, creep up to the first-floor, and then crouch down by the step which led into the front room, and peer beneath the door, through the opening made by the long wear of feet for a century and a half—watching, perhaps for a couple of hours, the bright guiding spirit of the sewing machine. But at last Lucy would catch sight of the two round bright eyes, peering beneath the door; and to her mother's great annoyance at one time, and supreme satisfaction upon another, she would fetch in the child, when according to Mrs. Hardon's mood she would act; for if the invalid was fretful

and weary, the little thing would be taken up to Jean, where she would stay willingly amongst the birds, as the cripple eagerly tried to be of service to his neighbour. But there were difficulties here, for Jean could only render this aid when *ma mère* was absent; though this was more frequently now, since Bijou had learned to stand upon his head, and so brought in more remuneration, without taking into consideration his later accomplishment of climbing two chairs, rail by rail, fore-feet upon one hind-feet upon another, and then smoking a tobaccoless pipe in triumph upon the summit, as he spanned the distance between the two chairs, and turned himself into a canine arch. But Bijou, doubtless, did not enjoy his pipe, for remembering how that he was *bête*, and for thinking of the whip, and the rapping his poor legs received before he was able to obey his mistress's commands—that is, if dogs can think.

There seemed to be a tacit understanding between *ma mère* and Lucy—an acknowledged dislike upon the old woman's part, which made the latter carefully avoid her, shrinking back into the room if she heard her footstep, so as not to encounter the quiet, bitter smile and sneering gaze of the old woman, while *ma mère* reviled Jean angrily, calling him nurse-girl, *bonne*, when by chance she learned of his past occupation. But Jean cared not, so long as there was something that should bring Lucy to his attic, where he could feast greedily upon her bright face and graceful form; and, could he have gone about, he would have followed her like a dog.

Jean's lark sang more loudly than ever, and Lucy's eyes had brightened as she told the cripple again and again how she loved its sweet notes; and, watching her press her lips once to the cage-wires, inviting the speckled bird to take a seed from the rosy prison, Jean's eyes dimmed as he gazed at her with a reverence approaching adoration. Visitor after visitor came to that attic, and went, buying and selling, and the little prisoners were constantly being changed; but the lark was there still, though more than once of late Jean had pressed its acceptance upon Lucy Grey; but with a sweet smile she had thanked him, begging that he would keep it for her sake; and he kept it, in spite of many an angry word from *ma mère*, when some advantageous offer had been made by a visitor; and it still whistled from its perch in the window.

"I will sell the bird myself—it is waste, it is pity, when we are so poor," *ma mère* would exclaim; and then Jean would turn upon her a peculiar soft, sweet smile, and whisper, "No, *ma mère*, you will not sell my bird, because I love it;" when passionately the old woman would now scold, now fondle the cripple, as she hung over the back of his chair.

One evening when the moon hung high in air, waiting the fading of day before shedding her pale light, Jean sat in his usual place in the window, dreaming of scenes of which he had read, and thinking himself in some sweet woodland home, forgetting the presence of squalor and misery, and even of the cages, as he listened to the twittering of the many birds hung around his head. There was a brightness in his eye and a smile upon his lip, for he was gazing across the court at just such a scene as

once almost spell-bound the curate. Merrily romping with the child, he could see Lucy in Jarker's room, flitting backwards and forwards past the open window. The child's happy laugh could be heard mingled with its shouts of pleasure; for the pent-up joyousness of its little nature was now having free vent.

All at once Jean's look of quiet enjoyment changed to one of unutterable rage and despair; the lips, but now apart in a soft smile, were drawn, as if by some fearful pain, his teeth were clenched, and his eyes wild and dilated. He tried to rise, but his helplessness was such that he sank back in his chair panting; but, raising his crutch, he struck savagely on the casement, shivering two or three of the little panes. He tried again and again to get up, and inarticulate sounds came from his lips. It was pitiful to gaze upon the struggle between the strong mind and the weak body, which would not obey his will as he tried again to rise; till, with a savage, guttural cry, more like that of some disappointed beast of prey than a human being, he threw himself towards the open window, as in his efforts his chair was overturned, and he fell upon the floor, where he lay agonizingly writhing in his impotence, as he absolutely foamed at the mouth.

Just then the door behind him opened, and, with a book beneath his arm, Mr. Sterne entered the room, when seeing, as he thought, the cripple in a fit, he sprang forward and raised him in his arms, to place him in a chair, at the same time running over in his own mind what would be the best course of action. But as he gazed in the poor fellow's dilated eyes, and saw their look of unutterable despair, one of Jean's hands was fiercely clutching his shoulder, and the other was pointing and waving frantically towards the open window.

The next instant, as if some strange suspicion had flashed upon his mind, the curate was gazing across the court, to utter almost the counterpart of the cry that had issued from the throat of Jean, as he caught sight of Lucy, frightened and horror-stricken, backing towards the room door, and Jarker, evidently half-mad with drink, holding her tightly by one arm; for he had returned unexpectedly, and, taking advantage of the girl's pre-occupation, had stolen softly into the room and closed the door.

Arthur Sterne saw this at one glance, and his face turned pale as ashes with the thoughts that this hasty look engendered. The next moment he had half-climbed from the window, and stood holding by one hand, measuring the distance across the court, as he stooped, lithe and elastic, ready for the bound; but reason told him that it was utter madness to attempt so wild a leap—a leap certainly death for himself, and probably worse than death for her he sought to save; and dashing back into the room he tore down the staircase.

Recovering somewhat, Jean now let himself slide down upon the floor, and, panting heavily, began to walk painfully across the room; for a moment he looked at the window, but the next he was making for the door, and then lowering himself from stair to stair. But before he was down the first flight, there was rescue at hand for Lucy. Bounding up the frail old staircase of the opposite house, Arthur

Sterne dashed frantically on, so that at every leap the woodwork cracked and trembled as if ready to give way. The height never seemed so great before, as landing after landing was passed, till he reached the last, to launch himself against the frail door, which, driven from its hinges, fell with a crash; and the next moment, dropping like some inert mass from the blow which fell upon his face, Jarker made the old place quiver beneath his weight. And there he lay, stupid and helpless from the sudden shock; the effect of the blow being apparently enough to destroy life, for the ruffian did not move.

Hardly breathing, and uttering no sound, the child crouched fearfully in a corner, while Lucy, trembling and half-fainting, clung to the curate, as sob after sob burst from her breast; and at last, as if stricken by death, she sank back, pale and inanimate, upon his supporting arm.

But there were no looks of love in Arthur Sterne's face; for, with brow knit, nostrils distended, and every vein in his face swollen and knotted, he stood with his heel crushed down upon Jarker's bull-throat, no mean incarnation of vengeance. Soon, though, the breath he had drawn with difficulty as he stood there, holding the fainting girl to his throbbing heart, came more lightly, the expression of rage fled from his features, and as he gazed tenderly upon the pale face so near his own he pressed his lips reverently upon her forehead.

"Lucy, my poor dove," he whispered, "will you not give me the right to protect you, and take you from this place?"

"Our beauty, some of us," seemed sighed at his ear.

"A lie, a base lie!" he muttered fiercely; though even then a change came over his face, the veins swelled once more in his forehead, and an agony of strange thoughts passed through his breast. And now, pale and anxious, two or three of the women lodgers came trembling to the door, amongst whom was Mrs. Sims, ready to take possession of the child, as, hurriedly passing through the wondering group, the curate bore his light burden to her home.

CHAPTER XLII.—A MEETING AND ITS RESULT.

IT was late before Arthur Sterne left Bennett's-rents that night. Septimus Hardon had been terribly excited—talking long and wildly of his poverty being the cause of the insult offered to his child. He had walked hurriedly up and down the room, gesticulating and threatening the scoundrel who had so repaid Lucy's kindness; and again and again it was upon the curate's lips to speak of the little one, and of Lucy's strange intimacy with its mother; but his spirit revolted from the task. In another case he would have spoken instantly; but here duty seemed to move in fetters that he could not break. In all concerning the poor girl he seemed bound to preserve silence till such time as some explanation should be given, and through all he had been in constant dread lest he should give her pain.

"I must prosecute the villain!" exclaimed Septimus.

"But the pain—the exposure—your child?" said the curate.

"What! would you have him go unpunished?" exclaimed Septimus.

"I would say 'No!' directly," replied the curate; "but I cannot help thinking of the painful scene in court, the public examination, and the cross-examination by the prisoner's counsel; and these men can always among themselves manage to get some able person to undertake their cause. It would be a most painful position in which to place your child. Her actions would be distorted to suit a purpose; and such a scene—"

Mr. Sterne's speech dwindled off, and became inaudible; for he felt that he had spoken unadvisedly; and a strange chill came over him as he thought, in the event of the affair being in court, what hold the opposing counsel could take of certain acts in Lucy's life; for, let them be ever so innocent, the light in which they would place her would be of the most painful character; and his lips were rather white as he said, "Sleep on it, Mr. Hardon, sleep on it."

"I will," said Septimus, proudly. "We are poor, Mr. Sterne; but there is no act in my dear child's life that will not bear the light of day."

"Doubtless, doubtless," replied the curate, in a low tone; "but, believe me, my advice is given with the best of wishes and intentions, Mr. Hardon. Have I not always tried to be a friend? And if there was somewhat of selfishness in my advances, I feel no shame in owning to you that I am moved by a feeling of more than esteem for Miss Grey; to whom any proceedings would, I am sure, be as painful as to myself."

Septimus Hardon started, for this was as sudden as unexpected. Such a thought had never entered his breast, and he gazed wonderingly at the calm, pale face before him, as in the silence which ensued they both sat listening to the painful, low sob which came now and again from the next room, where, forgetful of her own infirmities, Mrs. Hardon had been trying to soothe the agitated girl.

And then, hour after hour, Septimus sat talking with Mr. Sterne—for the first time now giving himself up entirely to his advice, and promising to give up all thought of prosecution, while he sought at once for some more suitable home for his wife and child, though, as he thought of his narrow, precarious income, he made the latter promise with a sigh. He talked long and earnestly, too, about his own affairs, being ready now to take the counsel that Mr. Sterne so freely offered; and when, with a lighter heart, the curate rose to leave, Septimus shook hands, with a puzzled expression upon his face, as if he hardly believed in the events of the past evening.

Upon slowly descending and reaching the door, Mr. Sterne drew back, asking himself whether he should be content, or seize the opportunity that now offered for him to know that of which it was evident, from his language, Septimus Hardon was still ignorant. The desire was strong to know more, and he yielded to it; for there before him, standing in the open court, and gazing anxiously up at the lighted window, was the woman who had caused him so much uneasiness; but neither he nor the woman saw that in the shade of the oppo-

site doorway a villainous pair of eyes were on the watch.

Again and again he had encountered this woman since he had determined to question her—upon the bridge at early dawn; by night, in the crowded streets, dressed in the extreme of fashion; shabbily dressed by day; but she always fled, and contrived to elude him. Who was she? What was she? How came she intimate with Lucy? Was it merely for the child's sake? Then why Lucy's dread?

The opportunity was here, he told himself, and he would know; and then, as he formed the determination, he stepped quickly out; but no sooner did Agnes Hardon catch sight of the curate's pale, stern face by the sickly flicker of the one lamp, than she turned and fled, while, without pausing to think, the curate closed the door and pursued her.

A dark, gusty time; late, for two had struck but a minute before by church after church, some sending their booming announcement clearly out upon the night-air, others discordantly, and jangling with the bells of others. Turning towards the end of the court, Agnes ran swiftly, her dress rustling, and fashionable boots pattering upon the pavement; but her pursuer was quickly on foot, and followed her along the end row, through Harker's-alley, Ray's-court, along one labyrinth and down another of the old district, now falling beneath the contractor's pick, till they had nearly returned to the point from whence they started. But flight was of no avail; and soon Arthur Sterne overtook the panting woman, himself breathless, and, heedless of her fierce looks, caught her by the wrist.

"Come with me," he said, sternly, as he drew her towards the entrance of the dark court where they stood.

"Why, why?" she exclaimed passionately, struggling with him the while. "Why do you stop me? Why do you pursue me—you, too, a clergyman?"

The answer to the taunt was a cold look, which Agnes Hardon saw and felt; for the next moment she was weeping passionately. "Why do you track and follow me?" she exclaimed, through her tears. "Let me go—you hurt my arm."

"Will you stand and answer my questions, then?" said the curate, as they now stood at the entrance of the court—a dark, gloomy archway, with a doorway here and there.

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Agnes, wearily, "if you will be quick; but there, I know what you would say, and it is of no use—I am past all that."

"Past all what?" cried the curate, sternly.

"Hope of better things," said the woman, with so weary and despondent a wail that her hearer shuddered.

"Hush!" he said; "you speak rashly, and without thinking." And releasing her wrist, he laid his hand gently upon her arm. "Listen," he said; "you have your woman's feelings yet."

"No," she replied hastily, "all—all gone; driven out of me—dead. Let me go, please; it's late, sir. I am a wretch, and it is useless to talk."

"But why do you pursue that young girl?" he said, pointing across the street to where Bennett's-

rents debouched. "Would you tempt her to be your companion?"

"No, no, no; my God, no!" half-shrieked Agnes, as she caught at his hands; "don't think that, sir."

"Then you *have* some womanly feeling left," said Mr. Sterne.

"Towards her, perhaps, yes."

"And your child?"

"Yes, yes, yes," wailed Agnes; "but don't torture me. What do you know?—what do you wish me to do?—why do you follow me?"

"What is your name?" said the curate, sternly; "and how came you to know her?" and he pointed again towards Bennett's-rents.

"Don't ask me, I cannot tell you," sobbed Agnes.

"But you bring misery on her and on her home. You have some hold upon her?"

"No, no, no," sobbed Agnes, hysterically—"none, none; but she knows who I am, and pities me and my poor child. God's blessing on her!"

"Amen!" muttered the curate under his breath; and his companion sobbed so convulsively that she could not speak; while, as they stood in the dark entry, a policeman came slowly by, flashed the light of his bull's-eye upon them for an instant, recognized the curate and passed on, and, till he was out of hearing, Agnes Hardon clutched the curate's arm.

"You are not afraid of the world and its opinions," she said, bitterly; "it cannot hurt you. Stay with me, and I will tell you all, for I believe you mean me well."

The curate bowed his head.

"I am miserable, wretched," she sobbed; "and what can I do? That man in the court has my poor child, and for some reason he will not give it up. I have tried to get it away again and again, even to stealing it, sir—my own little one; but something has always prevented me, and he watches me till, hardened as I am, I am afraid of him, for he comes over my spirit like the shadow of some great horror about to crush me. I love my child, my pure little angel, for—oh, sir, have pity on me, have pity!—I am its mother, and what else have I here to cling to? Can you not think how I must love it, though I left it with that poor dead woman? But she had a mother's heart, and was kind to it always. I could see it in my darling's blue eyes even when it racked my heart; but I was glad, though it would not come to me, and called her mother. I was happy, then; for did not she—she you say I injure—watch over it for me, and tell me of its bright eyes and sunny hair and winning ways, while, when I have listened to her, the tears have come gently to quench the fire in my brain, and I could think of home and the past, while she—she who loves my little one—lets me weep upon her breast, and I forget for a while that I am lost, lost, lost for ever!"

"Lost, lost, lost for ever!" She uttered these words so hopelessly, with such a wail of agony, that they seemed to echo along the archway, and to float off upon the night breeze, rising and falling, an utterance never to fade away, but to go on for ever and ever while this world lasts; to smite upon the sleeping ears of the cruel, the desolate, and the

profligate; to awaken here, perhaps, one sorrowful thought for wrong done, one thought of repentance; there, a desire to pause, ere it be too late, on the brink of some iniquity that should break a trusting woman's heart.

Tenderly, and with such a strange feeling of compassion in his heart as might have pervaded that of his Master whose words he taught, Arthur Sterne took the weeping woman's hands in his, as, sobbing more bitterly than ever, she sank upon her knees on the cold stones at his feet, weeping as though her heart would break; nay, as if through the torn walls of that broken citadel the flood of tears went seething and hissing, the ruins yet smouldering and burning with the fire of the fatal passion that had been their fall.

"What shall I do, sir?" she cried, at length, wearily looking up in the face that bent over her. "I would take my little one away, and go near the place no more, for I have been seldom lately, not liking that he should see me with her, for he followed us once, and I did not like it. I would have told her not to go near my child, but there is a woman sometimes there. He will not let me take it away. But tell me what to do, sir," she said wearily, "and I will do it."

"What!" she cried, starting up, "what!" she half shrieked, as he related to her the incident of the past night; "and this through me? Am I to bring misery everywhere? Oh, God, oh, God!" she cried, "that my weakness, my sin, should be ever growing and bringing its misery upon others! But stop, sir—listen," she exclaimed, huskily, as she clung to his arm; "what shall we do? If I could have seen this, sir, I'd have died sooner than it should have happened; believe me, I would."

The curate bent his head once more, as they stood facing the street, and said, in low, impressive tones, "I do believe you;" but he took no heed to a light, stealthy pace in the alley behind.

"What shall I do, sir?" cried Agnes, eagerly.

"Take the child away at once," replied Mr. Sterne, "and leave this life. But will you?"

"If the gates of heaven were opened, sir, and One said, 'Come in, poor sinner, and rest,' should I go?"

The stealthy step came nearer, but was unnoticed.

"Now tell me your name, and how came the intimacy of which I complain," said Mr. Sterne.

"I—I knew the family; I knew Lucy—Miss Grey—before her father—and—pray, pray ask me no more," gasped Agnes, appealingly. "I will do all you wish, sir. Help me to get my child, and I will go anywhere you may tell me; but don't ask me that, sir."

"Nay," said Mr. Sterne, with beating heart, for he felt that her reply would drive away his last doubt, "tell me now; you may trust me."

"Yes, yes," sobbed Agnes; "I know, but I cannot."

The step sounded very close now, while the light from the lamp in the alley was for a moment obscured.

"I will do all that you ask," sobbed Agnes. "Tell me what else you wish, and I will be as obedient as a child; but—"

"Prove it, then, by telling me how began your intimacy with Miss—"

There was a wild scream from Agnes Hardon as she thrust the curate aside; but too late, for a heavy, dull blow from behind crushed through his hat, and stretched him upon the pavement, where, for an instant, a thousand lights seemed dancing before his eyes, and then all was blank.

It was no unusual sound, that, a woman's shriek, especially the half-drunken cry of some street wanderer; but one window was opened, and a head thrust out, whose owner muttered for a moment, and then closed the sash, for though he had seen a woman struggling with a man, he did not hear the words that passed, nor could he see that the man was trying hard to extricate himself from the woman's grasp; but there were other wakeful eyes upon the watch.

CHAPTER XLIII.—WASTE PAPER.

"WELL, yes, sir," said Matt, standing hat in hand, "'tis snug and comfortable, sir; and I'm glad to see the change, and I'm sure I wish you long life to enjoy it. Glad you've got here all right, sir; and sorry I was too weak to help you move. I've got the address down all right in my mem.-book: look here, sir—150, Essex-street, Strand, sir."

"And now we'll go, then, Matt," said Septimus, rising.

"Go, sir?" said Matt.

"Yes," said Septimus, "if you will; for the thing has been too long neglected already."

"Very true, sir," said Matt; "but you told me as the parson, sir, Mr. Sterne, was going to take it in hand; and if so—"

"Now, Matt," said Septimus, appealingly, "isn't he lying upon a bed of sickness, weak and helpless, and unable to move?"

"Well, yes, sir, that's true; and a rum start that was, too. Wonder who would have a spite against him? But I thought that now, sir, as you'd—"

Septimus Hardon took the old man by the arm, and placed him in a chair; for it was evident that he was a little testy and jealous of other interposition in the matters in which he had taken so much interest; but the cordiality of Mrs. Septimus seemed to chase it away; while Lucy, returning from a walk, beamed so happily upon the old man, that he looked his old self again, and owned to the feeling that, as he expressed it, he had expected that he was going to be "pitched overboard," now there were new friends.

It was partly by Mr. Sterne's advice that Septimus had sought out and asked Matt to accompany him this day; for though much hurt, and weak from loss of blood, the curate had taken great interest in the future of the Hardon family. At his request Septimus had sought and removed to lodgings in Essex-street, and since then passed an evening by the curate's bedside; for he had been found by a policeman perfectly insensible, and carried home; and, though nearly certain of who was his assailant, he felt indisposed to take any steps in the matter, for fear that affairs might be made public which he wished concealed. He had not seen Lucy

since; but somehow there was a feeling of repose and content within his breast that it had not known for months; and he longed for the time when he could again meet with the woman whose words would have, he now felt, set him at rest for ever.

There seemed, too, a brightness in Lucy foreign to her looks, as Septimus leaned over her and whispered a few words before leaving; then, after kissing her tenderly, he descended to the street with old Matt, who, though weak, still refused sturdily every offer of a ride, and they trudged steadily on till they reached Finsbury.

"Hallo!" said Matt, "what d'ye call this? Same name, but the business is changed, and that's her a-cutting up paper. To be sure—why it is her! I thought I knew her face; but I was in such a muddle just then that all my letter was mixed, and whenever I wanted a p, I got a q, and all on like that. Why, she came and chattered away, and bought an old set of tobacco-jars and covers, and a heap of waste paper, of Mother Slagg, just before I went into hospital; and there they are, sir—that's them, fresh varnished and painted, and stuck on the shelf. Ikey took 'em home for her, and I remember asking myself ever so long as to where I'd seen her before. Well, come on, sir. I want a bit of snuff, so that's an excuse for going in. P'raps, after all, she's bought the very paper."

The visitors made their way into the old formal registry-office, turned into a very smart little shop, fitted up with some taste: where Miss Tollocks herself was busily weighing and packing a pile of those little rolls of tobacco known as "screws." Fine thick paper, too, she was using, such as would weigh well, and add to the rather fine profit she obtained upon her fragrant weed. For there was no mistake: Miss Tollocks had executed her threat—turned the registering out of doors, and taken to the business most popular in the streets of London. No seats now existed for maids to sit and wait to be hired from ten to four; no green baize; no intense air of respectability, but all quite the correct thing as established by custom in the weedy way. There was a monster cigar outside, set perpendicularly, with an internal gas-jet, and a transparency bearing the legend, "Take a light." On the other side of the door was a little, fresh-varnished, red-nosed, chip-elbowed Scotchman, taking snuff in the imperfect tense, with his fingers half-way to his nose; an imitation roll of tobacco hung over the door; while just inside, upon a tub, stood a small black gentleman in a very light feather petticoat, smoking a pipe about double the length of his body. Then there were clay pipes, crossed and tied into diamond-pattern doyleys, swung in the top panes of the windows; while beneath them "so gracefully curled" a perfect anaconda of a hookah—one that it would have taken a bold Turk to smoke. There were meerschaums and brier-roots, cutty, and billiard-pipes; glass, cherry, and jasmine stems; tobacco-pouches of india-rubber, looking like fresh-flayed negro-skin; snuff-boxes of all sorts and sizes, embracing miniature, scene, and tartan of every pattern; stacks of cigar-boxes carefully branded—but very European in their look; bundles of cigars tied with fancy

ribbon; the day's playbills on the walls; rows of snuff and tobacco jars, as pointed out by Matt, and labelled from "Scotch" to "Hardham's 37," and from "Returns" to "Latakia." There was a whole tubful of odorous shag, and a stack of packets of Bristol bird's-eye; the scales were of the glossiest, the glass-case of the cleanest, and altogether the shop owned by Miss Tollicks seemed to be of the most prosperous; for things looked smart and well-attended to—a rare sign of plenty of business, as, according to the old saying, "the less there is to do, the worse it is done;" but there was a strong smell of varnish, and it was evident that Miss Tollicks had been picking up her fittings here and there at various second-hand stores, or, as Matt Space called it, "on the cheap."

Matt advanced to the counter, and asked for his penn'orth of snuff.

"Then you're not dead!" exclaimed Miss Tollicks, putting down the jar in a most business-like way, with motions rapid as her speech; for she had banished the black-velvet blackbird and deportment along with the green baize; but, not quite used to her business, in spite of her ability of adapting herself to circumstances, she sneezed loudly as she lifted the lid. "And how do you do?—there, dear me, how I do sneeze!—and I thought I had quite conquered it, for it does look so—tchisher—er—so—er-tchisher! There, I'm sure I beg your pardon. And how do you do? And you've got well again, like poor Mary did, in that horrible place, who was dying, too, and didn't. And Mr. Harding, too! and I'm so glad to see you, for you were that kind to me, I don't know what I should have done else. Now, you've come to ask me about the doctor again—now, haven't you?"

Septimus said he had.

"Well, now, I hadn't forgotten it, and you were both right, you know; but I shall never forget your kindness, Mr. Harding, for, but for you that day, every one must have seen that I had been crying. But you were right; and the doctor did live here, and died here, too, ages ago; and then his widow went to live somewhere in one of those quiet streets by the Strand, going down to the river, you know; and then she died, and there was a sale, and that's all; and it isn't much, is it?"

Septimus said it was not, certainly.

"But then, you know," said Miss Tollicks, "it's no use to try and make more of things of that sort, is it? No, he didn't know the street, nor anything more about it, for he bought the lease of the house of some one else."

As for Matt, he did not speak, but took snuff ferociously, and glared at the paper squares upon the counter.

"But there, do come in," cried Miss Tollicks; "and, dear me, Mr.—Mr.—I don't know your name, but don't, pray, take snuff like that; you'll make yourself ill. But there, do come in." And, in spite of refusals, Miss Tollicks soon had her visitors seated in her bower, in company with a spirit-bottle and a couple of tumblers and sugar, a tiny kettle upon the fire singing merrily.

"I do suffer so from spasms," said Miss Tollicks, as she placed the suspicious-looking spirit-bottle

upon the table. But all these preparations were not made at once, for, from her many pops in and out of the shop, and the rattling of the scales, it was evident that Miss Tollicks had chosen the right business at last, and was prospering famously. The decanter was brought out of a Berlin-wool-worked overgrown dice-box on one side of the fire, the glasses from its ditto on the other, the kettle out of a window-locker, and divers other ways of economizing space were shown; while the visitors were informed that so much of the house was let off. "It all helps so," said Miss Tollicks; "for London rents are enough to kill you; and you doing nothing but feed your landlord."

Old Matt grunted acquiescence.

"Now one each, please," said Miss Tollicks, "just to be sociable; and then you can speak up for the quality of my goods. How do you find the snuff, Mr.—?"

"Space, ma'am," said Matt. "Good—very good, ma'am, but not durable."

"That's right," exclaimed Miss Tollicks, as she pressed the two mild Havannas she had brought in upon her visitors. "Don't mind me, pray—I am trying to get used to smoke as well as snuff."

Septimus and Matt were both non-smokers; but as they exchanged glances they came to the conclusion that they could extinguish their cigars as soon as they were outside. So Septimus set the example, with a very ludicrous cast of countenance, by placing the little vegetable roll in his mouth, and Miss Tollicks tore off a piece of paper from a square on the counter, doubled, lit, and handed it to the smoker.

Septimus Hardon's face was a regular study, as Matt, grumbling to himself, "Why didn't she make it snuff?" watched him trying to light his cigar—a new feat to him entirely.

"The other end first, sir," growled Matt; and in a rather confused way Septimus made the requisite alteration, and then sucked and puffed so vigorously that he extinguished the light, which he re-lit at the fire. But the next moment his face changed from one of comical resignation to a state of intense wonder, as old Matt, under the excuse of helping himself to a light, was turning over some leaves of a heap of waste paper on a chair by the door.

Suddenly, Septimus dashed the lighted paper upon the table, hurriedly extinguishing it with trembling hands, but not without oversetting his glass of spirits and water.

"What is the matter? Have you burnt yourself?" cried Miss Tollicks.

"Is it, sir?" cried old Matt, reaching across the table.

But Septimus Hardon did not move for a few seconds, but stood with his hands pressed down over the roughly-folded piece of paper, into which the spirits and water was now soaking, as it made a way between his fingers.

"Why, didn't I give you a splint?" exclaimed Miss Tollicks, whose mind was full of goose-grease, starch-powder, and cotton-wool. "Is it very bad?"

But Septimus Hardon did not speak, only slowly and with palsied hands unfolded the soaked paper; but even then he could hardly read it for the mist

that swam before his eyes. Old Matt, though, not to be behindhand, pulled out his glasses, and stretched out his hand to reach the paper; but Septimus shrank back, and then read with difficulty, for the ink had begun to look blurred with the wet:

S. HARDON,
Medicine and at- }
dance . } 2

And that was all. Septimus turned it over carefully, and found a list of names, but no other entry; there was a figure, part of a date evidently, at one edge, but it was charred, and, as he touched it and held it towards the window, it crumbled away into brown tinder. He read the entry again and again, and then looked at the ashes of the paper to see if anything could be made of them. Then, as if for a forlorn hope, he turned to his hostess, saying in a strange, husky voice—

"The date's burnt off. Where did you get this?"

"Oh, what have I done?" exclaimed Miss Tollicks. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing," said Septimus, looking in a dreary, bewildered way at Matt. "It's of no use; it's my usual ill-luck, and it's of no use to fight against it."

"I never saw such a thing in my life!" cried Matt, bringing his fist down upon the table so that the glasses jumped again. "Put it in a book, and no one would believe it: and yet there it is. I wouldn't have believed it myself if I had not seen it with my own eyes."

"But where is the piece you tore it from?" exclaimed Septimus, trembling still.

"To be sure!" cried Matt, exultingly. "But I was right—I did see it, and she bought it, and Ikey brought it here, and it'll all come right yet. Where's the piece you tore it from, ma'am?" and he again greatly endangered Miss Tollicks' glasses by thumping the table.

Miss Tollicks hastily produced the other half of the square of paper; but on one side the list of names was continued, while upon the other there was the tail of a flourish, the tops of a few letters, and the rest was blank.

"Have you any more of these sheets—these book-leaves?" exclaimed Septimus; when Miss Tollicks hastily took up the little heap on the chair by the door, the same that had excited Matt's curiosity, and into which he had been quietly peering.

"Those are not the same," said Septimus, despondingly. "This is thicker."

"Yes," said Miss Tollicks, dolefully, as she examined the few remaining squares upon the counter; "these are all different, too, and I don't know how that scrap came to be left. I used all that thick paper first, because it weighed well, and I used it for screws."

"But," stammered Septimus, "it is a part of the very man's books—the very man who lived here, and about whom we came to ask you."

"Bless me!" said Miss Tollicks dolefully, "and I've been letting it go for weeks past in screws to the Sun, and the Green Dragon, and the Duke."

"But let's see if there's any more," said Matt. "A leaf would do almost all we want, if it has only got the right dates."

Matt's advice was taken; screws were examined, turned over, unrolled; the tied-up squares of paper were looked at; Matt went down upon his knees behind the counter, and routed about amongst some rubbish; the squares freshly cut up were looked over. And then once more the heap on the chair in the room was scanned, leaf by leaf, but only one more fragment was found, evidently a portion of the same book; but it bore a date four years prior to the marriage of Septimus Hardon's parents.

"Makes worse of it," muttered old Matt to himself; "but perhaps he was only a young doctor, and one book lasted him a long time. S'pose we go and have a look round at some of the publics," he said, aloud, "eh, sir?"

Septimus jumped at the suggestion, and together they noted down the names of Miss Tollicks' principal customers for screws, for she said she was sure the thick paper had been used entirely for that purpose; but on making inquiry at the different pewter-covered bars, one and all of the stout gentlemen in shirt-sleeves and short white aprons, declared that they were sold out, and could have got rid of "twice as much."

"I suppose," said Septimus to one red-faced gentleman, "it would be of no use to ask you who bought the screws?"

The man stood, and softly rubbed with a strange rasping noise his well-shorn range of stubble on chin and cheek; then pulled open the screw-drawer, looked in it, then at the counter, then at Septimus, as if doubtful of his sanity, and said—

"Well, no, sir; I don't think as it would."

They returned to the little tobacconist's shop, Septimus holding tightly to the newly-found scrap of paper. And yet it was useless—waste-paper—no more. There could be no doubt about its being the entry made when he saw the light; but, now it was found, with his own hand he had destroyed the most precious part, for without date it was of no avail.

Septimus Hardon felt sick at heart when he again sat down in Miss Tollicks' room, and gazed with woebegone looks in his companion's face. The prize, as it were, within his reach—his old troubles swept away—his legitimacy proved—the cup almost at his lips, and then dashed away. It was in vain that Miss Tollicks vented her well-meant platitudes, and shone with hospitable warmth—Septimus Hardon seemed crushed, and Matt had scarcely a word to say.

"Have a little more sugar," said Miss Tollicks to the man of the bitter cup. "What a tiresome world this is! And only to think of me buying that very paper, and the great, dirty ruffian of a man bringing it home, and wanting to buy half a pound of tobacco before I began business and had a licence; and then asking me if I had any old boots, while he chipped two of the jars shamefully!"

"Only think," muttered old Matt, as they went slowly homewards, "for me to have had that entry under my very nose, and then only turned it up, and wouldn't look at it!"

Tim's Kit.

IT surprised the shiners and news-boys around the post-office the other day to see "Limp Tim" come among them in a quiet way, and to hear him say—

"Boys, I want to sell my kit. Here's two brushes, a hull box of blacking, a good stout box, and the outfit goes for two shillin's!"

"Goin' away, Tim?" queried one.

"Not 'zactly, boys; but I want a quarter the awfulest kind, just now."

"Goin' on a 'scursion?" asked another.

"Not to-day, but I must have a quarter," he answered.

One of the lads passed over the change and took the kit, and Tim walked straight to the counting-room of a daily paper, put down the money, and said—

"I guess I kin write it, if you give me a pencil."

With slow-moving fingers he wrote a death notice. It went into the paper almost as he wrote it, but you might not have seen it. He wrote—

"DIED.—Litul Ted—of scarlet fever—aged three years. Funeral to-morrer, gone up to Hevin—left won bruther."

"Was it your brother?" asked the cashier.

Tim tried to brace up, but he couldn't. The big tears came up, his chin quivered, and he pointed to the notice on the counter, and gasped—

"I—I had to sell my kit to do it, b—but he had his arms aroun' my neck when he d—died!"

He hurried away home, but the news went to the boys, and they gathered in a group and talked. Tim had not been home an hour before a bare-footed boy left the kit on the doorstep, and in the box was a bouquet of flowers, which had been purchased in the market by pennies contributed by the crowd of ragged but big-hearted urchins. Did God ever make a heart which would not respond if the right chord was touched?—*Detroit Free Press.*

Gladioli from Seed.

MANY of our readers know that the gladiolus is easily raised from seeds; but it may not occur to them that crossing one fine variety with another invariably breaks the tendency to revert to the original forms, and is likely to produce far more beautiful and distinct varieties than if we permit self-fertilization.

With many plants this is a nice and often tedious operation, with the gladiolus it is the simplest. As the flowers are large, and the anthers readily removed with the fingers—which should be accomplished as soon as they are sufficiently developed to admit them—the pollen may be applied directly from the anthers to the stigma without mechanical aid, as soon as the trifid stigma is ready to accept it, generally about the second day after.

The seed-pods contain from fifty to seventy-five winged bulblets. If sown in spring they will form small bulbs about as large as peas, several will bloom the second year, and all may be expected to bloom the third season—a good while to wait, it is

true; but it is pleasant to have some seedlings of your own to watch over, and compare with those named varieties you already have: an original painting is more creditable to the artist than a room full of Raphaels.

During the flowering season the poorer varieties should be eradicated, and only those kept that are wished to be retained, preference being given to those which show the best shape, marking, and colouring necessary to improve our collection. Though the named varieties of gladioli have become so numerous of late years that, to a beginner, a dealer's list is a thing of mystery, yet typical collections may be reduced to a very small number. If we were to look on a field of gladioli with one of every variety in bloom, we should see white, rose, red, deep red, and yellow as the essential colours; and it would require an inspection of individuals to determine the endless diversity of markings with which seedling propagation and cross-breeding have invested these superb plants.

If, therefore, without aspiring to an extensive assortment, the following varieties may be relied on to represent the principal colours: White, Shakespeare, one of the earliest to bloom, flowers and spike large and fine; Reine Blanche, La Candeur, and John Bull, a sulphur white variety, but free and good; Rose, Marie Stuart, one of the most beautiful of gladioli; Ambroise Verschaffelt, Mad. Robourdin, Ulysse, and Mozart, Red Meteor, bright in colour with purple blotches; Rosea perfecta, tinted violet; Sir W. Scott, ruby with carmine veining; Eugène Scribe and Le Pouissin, scarlet; Stuart Low, violet rose markings; Mars, Meyerbeer, flamed with vermilion; and Phœbus, marked with white. A few other good sorts are Robert Fortune, orange lake; Peter Lawson, rosy lilac; Rosa Bonheur, tinted lilac; Sappho, cherry, tinted orange; Michael Angelo, white with dark crimson spots; Ophir, dark yellow; and Isaac Buchanan, the best yellow variety yet introduced.

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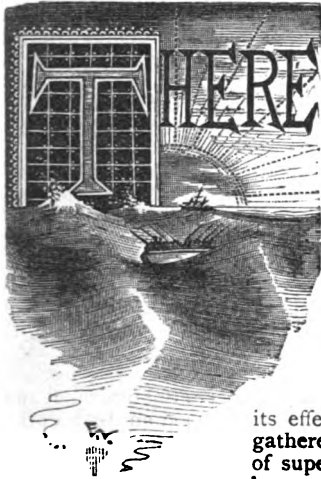
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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XVII.—OAKUM AT FAULT.



WAS a silence almost awful, affecting those on board so that they spoke in whispers; but every now and then some strange howl or wild cry made sailors and passengers start, and listen again for the weird whispers and noises that arose.

The solemnity of the scene had its effect on the men, who gathered together talking of supernatural visitations, haunted ships, and the ghosts of the old buc-

caneers who watched over their buried treasure, till they were all more or less infected with fear; and the squinting sailor expressed his opinion that no good would come of meddling with what was evidently meant to lie buried, he was sure—a declaration that excited the laughter of Tonio, who ended by calling him a cowardly fool.

Meanwhile, on deck the excitement of being at last so near the goal of their hopes kept the leaders of the expedition from seeking their cots, and Dutch was gazing thoughtfully at the breaking sea falling back in a murmur in golden foam, when he started, for a little cold hand was laid upon his, and he found that Hester was by his side.

"What do you want?" he said, coldly; but his voice had lost its former harshness.

"My husband to tell me that he believes and trusts me once again," she said, piteously.

And she sank on the deck to embrace his knees.

Dutch Pugh was a stern man, but he could not long resist this appeal. He had fought against the piteous glances now for many days. He had turned a deaf ear to Bessy Studwick's rebukes and insistence upon Hester's innocence; but now, in the soft darkness of that tropic night, in the silent grandeur of that mysterious sea, he felt his heart beat wildly with its old love. But there was that damning scene that he had witnessed from the garden, seeming to

rise up like a grim shadow between them, and, with a sigh, he raised her and led her weeping to the cabin stairs.

"Good night, Dutch, dear Dutch," she faltered, clinging to his arm.

"Good night, Hester," he said, coldly.

"Pray, pray, do not let us part like that," she whispered. "Dutch, dear Dutch, if you could only read my heart, you would know how unkind are your suspicions, how cruel to me. Let me explain. Question me—anything."

"Good night," he said. "Go down below. I will not have a scene here."

"I will obey you, Dutch," she said, quietly, as by a great effort she mastered her emotion. "Some day, dear, you will find out the truth. Till then I will wait patiently and unchanging. Don't be angry with me for coming. I should have died if you had left me behind."

She spoke with so sweet a pathos in her voice that Dutch's heart beat painfully, and the words were on his lips to say, "Come to me, darling, I do believe you;" but they were not spoken, for she slowly descended the stairs to the cabin, leaving him gazing wistfully after her. Then, walking to the side, he leaned his head upon his hands, praying in the bitterness of his heart that this painful time might end, and listening, as it were, to adverse promptings of his heart, seeming to hear the sweet innocency of her life proclaimed to him on the one side, while on the other, in hateful repetition, came the scenes he had witnessed, the dreamy vision, the strange alteration in her manner, Lauré's triumphant sneers, and the shadow on the blind.

"If Heaven had but given me the strength of mind that has been given to my outward frame, I could have been happy," he groaned.

"If you lean there and doze, so close to these forests, friend Pugh, we shall have you down with fever," said the captain, laying his hand upon his shoulder.

Dutch started up, for he had not heard him approach.

"I was only thinking," he said, hastily.

"I know what about, Pugh; and, from what my girl Bessy has said to me, I should like to talk to you. But I can't help feeling that matters are coming right without my guidance. There, I'll say no more. I only wanted to have a chat with you quietly. I've been talking to Parkley, and I wanted to tell you that I have made the strictest arrangements for guarding against surprise. Regular watch will be kept, just as if we were at sea; for, of course, before long it is probable that we may have many thousand pounds' worth of metal on board. But at the same time I think we have circumvented the enemy."

"You have seen nothing to excite your suspicions, then," said Dutch.

"No. Nor you?"

"Nothing whatever."

"That's well; but, all the same, we will not relax our watchfulness. Parkley and the doctor have both promised, and you must do the same."

"What is that?"

"Whenever you wake in the night, get up and come and have a turn round the deck. It will keep the men well to their work if they feel that at any time they may be overhauled."

"What was that?" said Dutch, softly; and he laid his hand upon the captain's arm.

They both stood listening intently, and gazing in the direction whence the sound had come.

The night was now intense in its darkness, and for reasons of their own—being, of course, far out of the track of ships—no lights whatever were shown; even those in the cabins were out, or so arranged that they should not attract attention if a wandering savage should have drawn up his canoe on the beach. The stars glittered overhead, but the greater part of the sky was overcast, and the heat seemed to portend a storm; but all was perfectly still, except the low, soft wash of the water as it broke on the sands, and bathed them with the pale gold phosphorescence.

"I heard nothing," said the captain, softly. "I'm afraid, Dutch Pugh, that we have frightened ourselves rather too much. All we need fear now is the weather. Perhaps we might have a little trouble with the Indians if they found us out; but we could easily keep them at bay."

"I certainly heard an unusual sound," replied Dutch. "Let's walk quietly forward."

They walked towards the bows, and as they did so a dark figure that had been lying a couple of yards from Dutch, close beneath the bulwarks, glided softly away, like some huge snake. So dark was it that it was hard to distinguish the outlines, and to trace where the figure went, while its movements were so silent that the two watchers saw nothing.

They went and spoke to the man leaning over the bows, who proved to be Dick Rolls.

"Heard anything?" said the captain, going up so silently that the man started.

"Lord's truth, capen, don't do that!" he exclaimed, in an injured tone. "It's skeary enough here listening to the things creeping about in the wood there. No, I aint heard nothing else."

"Keep a sharp look-out," said the captain, and the man uttered a growl.

Walking softly aft, they found the man on the watch to be Bob Lennie, who was seated on the bulwarks, making a sort of humming noise to himself, under the impression that he was singing. He, too, allowed himself to be so closely approached that they almost touched him before he spoke.

"No," he said, slowly, "I aint seed nor heered anything; only the lights over yonder in the woods, and the black things crawling in and out of the water where that there patch o' yaller sand is."

"You must have been mistaken, Pugh," said the captain. "All's right; let's go and turn in."

Dutch followed him down the cabin stairs, and the deck was left to the watch.

For quite half an hour all was perfectly still, except when some strange forest cry arose, and then two figures stole softly out from under the bulwarks, and went forward, to find that Dick Rolls had joined his fellow watcher for company's sake.

That was sufficient. The next minute the falls were seized, and the little dingy which hung from the davits was softly lowered into the water; two men slid down the ropes, unhooked the boat as it rose with the swell, and, without attempting to use the sculls, let the current drift them softly away into the bank of darkness that closed the vessel round.

Before dawn every man was on deck waiting for the rising of the sun, for there was not one who did not look forward with great excitement to the coming day, which might bring large wealth to some, and to all an increase of pay, besides which there was a certain fascination in the search. The mystery and uncertainty of the adventure had their charms, while to the more ignorant there was a thrill of excitement in the superstition with which their minds mingled the project. Those who had in their lives toiled hard to obtain the treasure, must, they felt, return to the place in spirit where it was lost, and try to guard it from sacrilegious touch.

The subject had been well discussed in the fore-castle, and there was hardly one who did not feel the childlike desire, mingled with dread, that is felt by the ignorant over some ghost story—the shrinking and the desire to know.

It was, indeed, felt to be an eventful morning, and Mr. Parkley looked pale as he stood on deck in the cool grey mist, talking to Dutch, and wondering whether good fortune was to attend their venture. As for Oakum and Pollo, they, too, were both on their mettle, for on them depended a good deal; while old Rasp also appeared among the excited group on deck, where he had been seen but little during the voyage after the first few days, for he had spent most of his time below, polishing helmets and oiling and re-oiling valves in the cabin he shared with Oakum, and where they had squabbled and disagreed all through the voyage.

There was a complete change in Rasp, as he came up to where his employers stood, for his listless way was thrown off, and a look of importance overspread his features, as he gave a side glance at Oakum, which plainly said, "There, your reign is over, and mine has begun."

"Shall I be getting up the tackle, Mr. Pug?" he said, "so as to be well ready."

"No, Rasp, we shall not want you yet," replied Dutch. "Wait till we get to the spot."

Oakum gave a chuckle, which made Rasp turn upon him angrily; but the old fellow's face was as hard and solid as if carved out of wood, and with not the vestige of a smile thereon; but Pollo, who stood close by, was showing his white teeth to the fullest extent.

"What are you grinning at, old ebony?" snarled Rasp, glad to have somebody upon whom he could turn.

"I just tink, sah, dat as I go to be berry busy find de treasure ship 'long o' Mass' Oakum, you

like to come and 'joy yourself, poke de galley fire all day."

"Yah!" ejaculated Rasp, angrily; and he walked to the side, and began spitting viciously at the rippling waves under the schooner's counter.

"How is it that boat's down in the water?" exclaimed the captain suddenly, as he crossed to where the dingy was swinging by her painter.

"I left her hanging to the davits last night," said the mate. "Do you know, Oakum?"

"Wasn't my watch," said that worthy, "but the skipper's. Dick, Pollo, and Bob Lennie was on deck for one spell."

"Do you know why the boat was lowered?" said the captain, turning to the men, who had just left their hammocks.

Bob Lennie the quiet shook his head, and Dick Rolls' eyes nearly disappeared under the thick bridge of his nose as he stared down with his head first on one side, then on the other.

"No, I dunno," he growled. "I never knowed it was lowered."

The question was passed round, but no one knew anything about it; and the men shook their heads, and seemed to think it was very mysterious.

For there seemed to be no reason why it should have been let down. Had it been missing altogether, and a man or two with it, the cause would have been plain; but every man of the crew was on deck, and one and all denied knowledge of the boat having been touched.

This excited the suspicion of the captain again; but the busy events of the morning chased the feeling away, and it was soon forgotten.

For Sam Oakum was to all intents and purposes now captain of the schooner, and Pollo his mate, as the former took the direction, had the anchor heaved up, and, consulting again and again with the latter, the vessel was allowed to drift with the current a few hundred yards.

"Do you feel pretty certain, Oakum?" said the captain, after a time, for the old sailor's actions did not inspire him with much confidence. In fact, after running half a mile with the current, he suddenly gave orders for a couple of sails to be hoisted, put the schooner about, and began to beat back.

"You let me alone," growled Oakum. "I'm a-doing the best I can. You see, it's a good many years since I was here, and the bearings ar'n't so fresh in my mem'ry as they was."

The captain said nothing, only glanced at Dutch, who had heard every word, and as the eyes of these two met they seemed to say to one another, "Suppose this trust of ours should be a foolish one, after all."

Mr. Parkley went up to Oakum once and spoke, but he received so sharp a reply that the old fellow was left alone. It was evident that he was a good deal puzzled, for in the course of an hour he renewed his quid of tobacco half a dozen times, and literally scraped the perspiration off his face with his rough finger, as he stood by the wheel giving directions to the man who steered.

It was a most interesting time to all on board: the passengers were on deck, and even listless John

Studwick stood leaning over the bulwarks, with his eyes brightening, and Mr. Wilson and the doctor seemed to be as eager as the rest to find the buried treasure. Even the mulatto and the black sailor seemed roused from their slow-going apathy, and watched Oakum as he changed the course of the vessel from time to time, running amongst rocks, now close in shore, and once so near to a point that the waving cocoa-nut and other palms almost touched the rigging, and Captain Studwick stood ready to seize the wheel himself, for it seemed as if the schooner would be run aground.

If the thirst for gold had been less strong, no one there could have failed to revel in the beauty of the scene; for now in that ever-increasing heat of the morning sunshine, the black mystery of the forest seemed to be swept away, and they gazed upon a belt of wondrously tinted green, and leafage of every variety and shape, seen beyond a narrow strip of golden sand, while sometimes, where rock took the place of the sand, the strange tropic trees waved right over the limpid sea which washed their roots. So close were they at times, that the very veins of the great leaves could be traced, and the beauty of the various tints and lovely flowers of parasitic growth, which climbed up and then hung down their great trumpet-shaped bells with lavish prodigality to swing in the hot breeze, was reflected in the little creeks and inlets of the coast.

Wilson was in raptures, and wanted to form an expedition directly to go in pursuit of the gorgeously-feathered birds that came down to the edge of the forest, and then, uttering strange cries, flitted back into its shades. John Studwick looked earnestly at the leafy paradise, with its brilliant blossoms, and longed to lie and dream away his hours in the delicious shade, and even the doctor ceased to watch intently every motion of Bessy Studwick, and gazed with delight at the beauteous scene.

But there was the adverse side to the beautiful picture; for here and there in the inlets, black, rugged, weird-looking forms could be seen lying apparently asleep on the sand, but ready to scuffle back into the water on the vessel's approach—alligators, looking as dangerous as loathsome. There were dangers, too, in the sharp-edged rocks, around which the pale blue sea rose and fell so placidly; and a score of times it seemed as if the schooner's planks must be pierced by the sharp points that were so threateningly near. Always, however, in the most threatening times, a turn of the wheel sufficed to send the graceful vessel clear, and so skilfully was she handled, that Captain Studwick grew more satisfied on that point, as he felt doubts of Oakum's other knowledge grow stronger every hour.

His doubts were shared, too, by Dutch and Mr. Parkley, and it was very evident that he was at fault, for Pollo was severely snubbed upon several occasions when he hazarded a remark, and the men began to talk in whispers as they saw the schooner retrace her path again and again.

"Can't you find it, Oakum?" said Dutch, at last, as he dragged his eyes from the group composed of his young wife, Bessy Studwick, and her brother, all seated in the mellow shade cast by an awning; for

the sun was now sending down a shower of silvery white-hot arrows upon the deck.

"Don't you be in such a mighty fuss, Mr. Dutch," was the tetchy reply. "These here things aint done in a hurry. I'm a-working as hard as ever I can. It's hereabouts somewhere, on'y the bearings don't seem to be the same."

"Can I be of any assistance to you?" said Dutch.

"Yes; just get out of the way, sir. There, be smart ahead there. Be ready to let go the anchor when I cry let go."

As he spoke, he gave the man at the wheel an impatient look, took the spokes in hand himself, ran the vessel in towards the shore, then gave the word; there was a dull splash, the chain rattled out through the hawse-holes, and was stopped; the sails flapped and shivered in the gentle breeze, and the schooner softly swung round, with a motion hardly perceptible, till she lay with her head to the current, now so slow that its effects on the vessel could hardly be seen.

"Is this the place, then?" cried Mr. Parkley, eagerly, as he ran to peer over the side, where half the men were already similarly engaged.

"No, 'taint," said Sam, crossly, as he let go the spokes, and, taking off his straw hat, began scratching his bald head in a vicious way. "It's somewhere about here, but the bearings is altered. There were four tall cocoa-nut trees on a bluff, and you had to bring them in a line with a bit o' rock sticking out o' the water like a wet monkey, and they're gone."

"But are you sure this was the piece of coastline?" said the captain, rather sternly.

"Course I am. This is one o' the places, and there's two more—one on 'em ashore, 'bout fifty miles from here."

"Had he not better try that first?" said Dutch.

"What's the good o' your talking like that, sir, when you've brought diving things o' purpose to go down? No, I aint half done yet. Here, I've finished my bacca. Some 'un lend me a bit."

The mate handed him some, and Sam stood staring about, while the men were evidently laughing at his failure.

"Think, Mass' Oakum, sah—"

"No, you don't," said Sam, who wanted some one on whom to vent his spleen. "You don't think, and you never did think, and never will with that thick skull of yours. So hold your tongue."

Pollo held his tongue, put all the little nose he had in the air, and stalked off with great dignity to his galley.

"What do you propose doing?" said Captain Studwick.

"Lower down the jolly boat," said Sam, after indulging in another good scratch.

This was immediately done, and with four men at the oars, and Dutch, Mr. Parkley, the captain, and Oakum for freight, they pushed off from the schooner.

Oakum took his place in the bows with Dutch, and then, directing the men to row very softly as he directed, they went slowly forward over the limpid waters.

"You keep a good look-out over the side, Mr.

Dutch Pugh," said Sam, "and I'll do the same. It's so clear that you can see seven or eight fathoms down; and if you see anything particular, give the word, and we'll stop."

Heedless of the blazing sun—which, however, made their task very easy, lighting up, as it did, the clear waters below—they zigzagged for hours in all directions from the schooner, seeing below groves and trees of coral of the most wondrous tints, among which darted and played fish banded with gold, vermillion, and azure, silvery-sided, olive, green, and blue of the brightest and every tint. Great shells, almost as gay in colour, were slowly kept in motion by their inhabitants as they crawled over the surface of the many-hued rocks. Shoals of fish played amongst the moving seaweeds, and then flashed away like some brilliant silver firework, as the shadow of the boat approached them, its shape being plainly seen on the sand below; and on every side new objects of beauty came into sight. Treasures of natural history there were of every kind, but not the treasure they sought; and at last, worn out with heat and disappointment, Mr. Parkley proposed that they should return.

"What an opportunity," thought Dutch, as, after a growling protest, Sam Oakum seated himself in the bottom of the boat and began viciously to cut off a wedge of tobacco—"what an opportunity we have given those on board for a rising, if there are any suspicious characters there." And then his heart leaped, and his hand involuntarily sought his pistol, as he thought of his wife and the danger to which she would be exposed.

"Suppose," he thought, as he shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed at the distant vessel, "those two scoundrels should assume the command, and set us at defiance, we could never get back on board."

He shuddered as these thoughts gained stronger power over him, and looked from one to the other; but it was evident that no such thoughts troubled them, for as the oars of the four sailors lazily dipped, and made the water flash and sparkle, he could see that his companions, listless with the heat, were leaning back and troubled more with disappointment about the failure.

"Look here, everybody," said Sam suddenly, in a voice that, heard in that wonderful solitude, made every one start. "I'm not beat, you know; not a bit of it. Them there ships is to be found—what's left of 'em—and I'm going to find 'em."

"I hope you are, Oakum," said the captain, quietly; "but don't boast. The first effort has not been a successful one."

"I never said as I'd find 'em the first time," said Sam, sharply. "'Taint likely as a man's going to sail a ship thousands o' miles and put her right on the spot. You wait a bit."

No one answered; and, to Dutch's great delight, they were soon back on board, to find everybody half asleep, and no sign whatever of danger; and, though far from being disposed to greet his wife in the old way, he felt, in spite of himself, obliged to say a few kind words, as she pressed forward to meet him, her eager eyes telling of her joy to see him back. Then he shrank away with a frown, for

it seemed to him that the mulatto was watching them curiously, though the second time he glanced at the man he was busy arranging a brightly-coloured kerchief over his head, before leaning back against the bulwark with half-closed eyes.

Nothing had taken place in their absence, and a dead calm had fallen. The heat was excessive, for not the faintest breath of air came from land or sea; but the beauty of the surroundings seemed to have its effect upon all, even to the lowest sailor; for as the evening came on, and the stars were lighted aloft, there was a dreamy delight in the darkening forest ashore, where fire-flies flitted; and once more strange whisperings, rustlings of trees, and splashes in the water were heard. But they did not excite the superstitious dread of the previous night; and at last, when most careful arrangements had been made by Captain Studwick to guard against internal and external surprise, watch was set, and the silence of death seemed to fall upon the schooner.

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE PROTECTORS OF THE TREASURE.

THAT night passed away quietly enough, after a discussion as to future proceedings, when it had been decided to leave Sam Oakum to his own devices; for they were so solely dependent upon his success that it would have been folly to interfere.

"It was easy enough at Ramwich to talk about sweeping the sea till we found what we sought," said Mr. Parkley, dolefully; "but now we are here, it seems as if we might hunt for our lifetimes without success."

"And yet that scoundrel discovered the old wrecks," said Dutch, firmly. "What one man has done another can do. For my part, now we are out upon the adventure, I mean to stop till we succeed."

Mr. Parkley patted him on the back, and looked up smilingly at him; and Dutch's words seemed to impart spirit to all present.

Sam Oakum had insisted upon taking the first watch, declaring that he was not tired, and wanted to think; and the consequence was that the sun was well up before he put in an appearance on deck after his breakfast.

"Now, Oakum," said Captain Studwick, rather impatiently, "what do you purpose doing? Shall we up anchor and run along the coast a little way, and then anchor and have a fresh search?"

Sam did not reply, for he had his cake of tobacco in one hand and his knife in the other, and he was going to take a piece off for his morning refreshment. But knife and cake remained unemployed, as his attention seemed fixed by something ashore. Then the cake was thrust back into one pocket, the knife closed with a snap and thrust back into the other, and he took a glance round.

The ship was now swinging in a different direction to that which it had occupied on the previous day, and this seemed to puzzle Sam for the moment. The tide was low, too, and that made a difference in the surroundings—rocks standing clear of the water that were invisible before, and there was a ravine opened out that was not visible on the previous day.

"She's dragged her anchor a bit, hasn't she?" said Sam, at last.

"No," said the captain, "we were too close to those rocks, so I up with the anchor this morning, and let her drift a couple of hundred yards before dropping it again."

"Just hand us that double-barrel spyglass o' yours, Mr. Pugh, will you, please?" said Oakum, quietly; and when he had set it to the right focus for his eyes, he took a long look at the shore, shut the glass up, returned it, sat down on the deck, and taking out his tobacco and knife, hewed off a good piece of the hard cake, and thrust it into his mouth without a word.

"Well, Mr. Oakum," said the captain, at last, with a look of annoyance on his face, "what is to be done next?"

"Send forrard for Pollo," said Sam, coolly.

The captain gave an impatient stamp, but turning to the mulatto, who was by the bulwark, sent him for the black cook.

"You want me, sah?" exclaimed Pollo, showing his white teeth.

"So I do, Pollo," said Sam, borrowing the glass again from Dutch, and, after focusing it, placing it flat on the bulwarks, and bringing it to bear on some object ashore. "Now, come here, Pollo," he continued, "stoop down and take a squint through this here glass, and tell us what you see."

Pollo stooped down to look through the glass.

"Not that way, you lubber," cried Sam. "What are you shutting one eye up for? Don't you see it's a double spyglass?"

"Oh, yes, sah—I see, sah," said Pollo, bending down for another look.

"Now you're a-shutting up the tother eye," cried Sam, sharply.

"Was I, sah? Well, so I tink I was. Now, den, I try bofe open togedder. Dat's him; I see beauful now. All de lubbly trees shinin' in de sun, and four big long trees lie down top o' one anoder. All blow down by de wind."

"And what's that, Pollo?" cried Sam, giving him a slap on the back, as he pointed to a rock lying under the shade of a point right aft.

"Dat am de rock like de wet monkey, Mass' Oakum, sah. Dere, genelmen, I tell you I find de place easy 'nough."

"Don't you think it might be me as has found it?" said Sam, with a grim laugh. "There, gentlemen, I couldn't answer for those trees being blown down by a hurricane. I looked out for them to take my bearings, and they were gone. I must have seen the rock, too, at low water."

"Then you think we are near the place?" cried Dutch, eagerly.

"Well, sir," said Oakum, coolly, "I won't be too cock-sure to a foot or two in a few thousand miles; but if the capen here will send out a kedge anchor in the boat, and drop it about a dozen fathoms towards that rock to port there, and haul upon it till the schooner's bowsprit pynts dead for them two rocks, so as we has them in a line, I'll eat my hat if we aint right over some part or other of the old wreck."

A dead silence ensued for a few moments as if

every man's breath was taken away, and then giving his orders sharply, a little anchor was lowered down into the jollyboat; and to Mr. Jones was given the task of carrying out the manoeuvre. This was soon done—the anchor dropped over the boat's side with a splash, taking firm hold directly, and then the hawser was hauled upon by the men on board, till the position of the schooner was altered so that she lay with her bowsprit pointing right across the two rocks indicated by Oakum.

"That will do," the latter shouted—"not another foot. Make fast."

(*To be continued.—Commenced in No. 212.*)

Trout in Westphalia.

WE are crossing London-bridge on the top of a stage-coach this bright morning, July 6, 1878. Ben, looking wistfully at the ripple and sheen upon the surface of the Thames, bethinks him of those purer streams amid the mountain forests, and he ejaculates—

"Ah, lad, what a morning this for trout on a stream such as we have seen together!"

I make no answer, but sink into a reverie; the chaffing of coachy, cabby, and street sweep falls upon a listless ear for the nonce. More than three thousand miles of space lie between me and that pretty stream, with which I was so enchanted that from her foaming, restless bosom I plucked my *nom de plume*; and the bright and pleasant memories now chase and crowd each other in my mind as I while away the hours in fancy upon her mossy banks, 'neath shading sugar maple boughs, among whose branches sing the oriole, robin, and cheewink, and where silently flits the rose-breasted grosbeak and the scarlet tanager. Anon, the yellow-billed cuckoo sends forth her weird notes, foretelling the coming shower. The raven, black and glossy, caw-caws from the dead pine tree top, and makes the forest reverberate the sound from hill to mountain. The woodpecker screams out his shrill cry of delight, as he fastens himself upon the trunk of a dead tree, and proceeds, with loud-sounding, well-directed blows of horny beak, to break away masses of rotten wood, to find the fat worm lying beneath. I now clamber over gnarled trunk of fallen forest giant, and cast my fly into the swirl beneath its shade, or leap from rock to rock, or wade thigh-deep in her torrent, my very spirit cooled and refreshed by the laving crystal waters from fern-shaded springs. Every now and then a gamey spotted trout is slipped through the hole in creel top, and I move on until I am rudely aroused by Ben—

"Let us go trout fishing."

To which, with a tinge of bitterness, I answer—

"Ask me to go up in a balloon, go to the Tower, to the Crystal Palace, to the Zoological Gardens, or do something possible; but don't taunt a helpless American sportsman with such ideas when their fulfilment is so impossible."

"We'll go to Germany to-night," replied Ben, "if you say the word; and by Tuesday next I will put you down on a trout stream, amid mountain scenery which your wildest fancy cannot imagine, and where

the trout are so savage that they challenge anything, from a plack palmer to a 'white moth.' The stream is a beauty, and I have a standing invitation from my friend, Herr Krieger, who has it in his power to obtain the courtesy of fishing for *forellen* (the German name for trout), and in any of the mountain streams owned and preserved by the Baron Von Duiker."

Evening saw us, valises in hand, rods strapped together, jumping from a Hansom cab at Holborn Station, and we were soon speeding our way by rail over the Surrey downs, the South downs in the dim distance, the spires of London receding from our view, and the grand towers of the Crystal Palace standing like giants against the sky in the gloaming. The herder was gathering his sheep, the song of the milkmaid came to our ears, and the lasses and lads were playing lawn tennis on green sward at the villas as on we sped to Queensboro'. Here, at ten o'clock in the evening, we embarked on the staunch little Dutch channel steamer, the *Staats Flushing*, to cross the Straits of Dover to Flushing, in Holland.

Entering the harbour of the River Schelt, we realized that the Dutch had full possession of Holland, as their soldiers swarmed everywhere; and there we had to open our baggage, and exhibit our scanty wardrobes to the Custom House officials; and after a miserable sandwich compound of strong cheese and black bread, the military-looking guard shouted out in Dutch, "All aboard!" and we were off again by the Netherlands State and Bergish Margish Railway. I was hungry, I was ravenous; but that sandwich baffled every attempt to swallow a mouthful. It choked me; there was no water on the train—there never is in Europe. I could have spent the entire day over that sandwich, had not Ben, who was gazing out of the window of the car, dispelled my hunger by calling my attention to the number of wild duck that were disporting themselves among the tall reeds and grasses that grew in great luxuriance in the water along the railway. They were evidently bred here, as they paid little attention to the passing train. Occasionally they would rise in pairs, or fours or fives, and fly away to some other more secluded spot across the level lowlands; but oftener, they would swim about close enough for us to see their bright eyes. Hares were seen—great big fellows, three or four times the size of our little cotton-tails—scampering away from one hedge to another.

Along the shore of the arms of the ocean, curlew, willet, and a great variety of wading birds were seen in immense numbers, and such wing shots were presented as to make my fingers tingle. I was no longer hungry.

Cranes, bittern, sea-gulls, and storks abound everywhere; in fact, I bethought me of the boundless Iowa prairies, where it is my wont to spend September days in shooting prairie chicken, duck, and sand-hill crane.

The roads are in this country all elevated, to permit travel in winter, when the incursion of the tides overflow the land. The crops are all flourishing, and everywhere the waving patches of rye, wheat and barley are seen. There is no corn here, and no fences.

The barns and dwellings are all under one thatched roof. The women work in the fields, and to view their broad shoulders, big arms, stout ankles, and, shall I say it, big wooden-shod feet, one would admit they were intended for purposes of industry of a heavy character. Their dress, though plain, is usually clean and tidy.

We reach Ellerfeld, in Germany, about three in the afternoon, where there are now Kaiser's William's stalwart soldiers, and our baggage is again examined, and off we go again through Dusseldorf, and over the highly cultivated rolling lands of Westphalia, to our destination for the night at Hagen, among the mountains, where we are met by Herr Kaler, another German friend of Ben.

After dinner we take a drive down the valley of the Ruhr, and up the mountain side to an old castle of the feudal ages. The scenery is picturesque and grand, the river winding its serpentine way—a mere silver ribbon on an emerald ground of meadows, dotted here and there with the herds of cattle, far, far below us in the valley. In front of us, frowning at the castle, and, as it were, bidding defiance to its hereditary power, is old Geisberg Mountain, with its battlemented tower monument, erected in the time of King Jerome Bonaparte, last King of Westphalia, in honour of one Baron Stein. Who this baron was I was not able to learn, further than the Deutcher, who handled the whip and reins at my side with such dexterity as to keep his fine, big, Westphalian bays on the jump constantly up hill and down vale, assured me the baron was a "*grosser mann*" (great man) "in das country."

That evening Ben's friend—soon to become my own as well, and one long to be cherished in my bosom—called upon us, in the person of Herr Peter Krieger, director-in-chief of the Munden and Schwerte Eisenindustrie, which is the large iron-works of the region, employing many hundreds of men. Herr Krieger is an enthusiastic sportsman, and speaks English fluently, and, as we sat that night over a bottle of real Hochheimer, and pure Seltzer water from the spring less than fifty miles away, we were regaled with some thrilling stories of great *forellen* (trout) the genial Herr had taken; and in recounting in detail his adventures with big pike and *forellen*, his very soul would light up, and his soft, grey eyes flash with a fervour that only a true lover of the sport can feel.

At last we parted for the night, he to return to Schwerte, and we to bed; but before leaving, the kind Herr Krieger informed us that his carriage would be sent at six in the morning to take us to the fishing-grounds, twenty miles away in the mountains, near Nunden, where, by the time we would arrive, he would have the necessary permits awaiting us from the Baron Von Duiker, whose baronial residence is in the Balt Mountains, near Nunden. Press of duties at the works prevented the kind Herr Krieger from going with us, but he would join us later in the sport.

At six promptly we had a good breakfast stowed away under our fishing jackets, and rods and other *armamentaria piscatoria* on the front seat of the big German road carriage, with Alter Coonrod on

the box, and a fine pair of deep bays looking through the collars. A grand flourish of the long whip, which cracked and cracked again at each successive flourish like a German needle-gun, sent the powerful bays into a bounding gallop down the broad, level road, shaded by linden, poplar, and beech trees. The hoofs resounding in the cool, damp morning air made dame and red-cheeked *fraulein* peep from small cottage windows. We were happy, and greeted everybody, right and left, who smiled and greeted again, and shook their heads approvingly; all of which amused Alter Coonrod, who, at last, with a loud *ru-r-r-r-r-r*—a roll of the Dutch for whoa—drew his horses up at the first toll-gate and confidentially told the toll-keeper, *en passant*, that we were Americans—the toll being paid by Coonrod, who imperatively told Ben, who speaks German, that Herr Krieger gave him the money for toll, and would be very angry if it was not so disbursed by him. We yielded our attempts to pay, and, acknowledging the friendly greeting of the old toll-keeper, away we went again at a spanking pace over the best roads it ever was my good fortune to travel upon.

But we had been up late and early, and travelled far, and the big deep seats of the carriage were sleep inviting, and to sleep we went; when I dreamed of trout and Dutch cheese, Rhine wine and Bologne sausages, and the immortal and indomitable tribe of barbarians who in early times inhabited these grand forests and mountains—the Cheruskians. I dreamed that their chief, Armenius, came down to the stream where I was fishing, and ordered me off the premises. He was clad chiefly in the consciousness of his own power, with a string of wild boar tusks hanging around his neck. This was about all he had to cover his nakedness, except a wealth of blonde curls and a wild boar skin, with the bristles on, hanging about his waist. When I ventured to ask this magnificent barbarian how far I had to go to get off of his dominions, he told me it would take five days' journey. But this was all a dream, and, I dare say, prompted by the historical impressions of the country and the atmosphere of the Teutoburger Forest, which lies among these very hills and vales.

There a noble shaft rears up its head 200 feet high, upon which is a statue of the brave and crafty Armenius, sword in hand, erected in fond memory by his descendants, the present inhabitants of Westphalia. The story of Armenius, the Cheruskian prince, is a little digression, which I will give you briefly, as told me the night before by Herr Beckhaus, his intelligent descendant.

Armenius, son of the Cheruskian prince Ligimer, was born in the year 16 Anno Domini, and while young was captured by some Roman legions fighting in North-western Germany, a long distance from his own home. He was taken to Rome as a hostage, and while there became educated in the Latin language and Roman arts of war, and was afterwards made a Roman citizen, knight, and commander of a cohort in the battles on the Danube against the enemies of Rome. He, after gaining honours abroad, returned to his native country, where Varus was now Roman governor of the province. Varus was

secretly much hated by the warlike and liberty-loving Cheruskians, for his oppressive tyranny and injustice to these subjects of Roman empire; and Armenius, who still loved his native country with that love that can never die in the heart of a veritable patriot, formed a secret resolution to free his nation from the hated Roman yoke; and to this end he feigned friendship with Varus, who soon after entrusted young Armenius with the command of the German legions sent to quell other tribes which Armenius had secretly excited to rebellion. He then, with these legions of German warriors re-united, drew Varus and the Roman legions—all now informed of the situation—into the Teutoberger Forest, much of which is marshy and intricate, and in which the German warriors were hidden, and here a battle raged for three days, in terrific storm and rain, where barbarian lance clashed against Roman shield, and the Roman warriors were slain in countless numbers. Varus vanquished, his warriors nearly all slain around him, now, in desperation, at the last moment, threw himself on his own sword rather than yield himself a living prisoner to his barbarian subjects.

The Romans sent back their legions under Germanicus; but the brave Armenius, now called the liberator of his country, fought with his cohorts, and hurled them back again; and never more could Roman yoke be placed on Cheruskian neck.

This brave and youthful prince was afterwards murdered by his own parents, for what reason my historical budget does not speak.

But we are by this time on the stream—the Hunne—which winds through the Balt Mountains; and while we are putting together our rods and casting lines and flies, the following note is handed to Ben by a man who has just dismounted from a horse. I look over Ben's shoulder as he reads it, but it is Dutch to me; and I impatiently tell him to give it to us in English, and quickly too. He translates as follows:—

"This is in reply to my friend, Herr Krieger's, honoured favour, in regard to fishing, for his friends, which is granted with pleasure," etc.

"That's all right. Stand aside, my boy, I am going to cast right over there, where I see two big ones."

The line is dry, and the gut all curled up; but out it goes, a distance of eighteen feet, and drops lightly on the surface by an old log. Two big fellows made a dash at it, one of them going clean out of water; but I am excited, and I strike wildly, not hooking either.

"Keep cool, lad, you'll break your rod," said Ben, "if you lunge and jerk in that way."

I cast again lightly in the same spot, when there is another rush, and a twenty-inch savage breaks water at once. The way he tears about tells me he is firmly hooked, and I, for fear of my light tip, humour him by letting him take a spin down toward some big rocks, where the stream tumbles over in a cascade.

The young German "gaffer," with landing-net in hand, makes a dash at him as he breaks the surface again, nearly under my feet by the bank, and falls headlong and nearly tumbles into the stream. I

motion him back, and reel up line a little, as there is too much line out to fairly manage this fighter, who seems to get worse and worse.

We each had a man with us. Where they came from we didn't know; but they informed us they were sent to wait upon us, and show us where to fish; and, as I turned my head, Ben's "gaffer" showed by his delight that he had also caught a Tartar, and was having a lively time. My boy, who was much excited lest I should lose my fish, made another unexpected dash with his net from the protruding root of a tree, and captured my fish before he was half conquered. A disgorge was necessary with this, as with several others. They seemed to be so ravenous as to swallow the fly instantly.

Around the turn of the stream below the cascade I saw the fish rising in numbers, some of them large; but, though excited at the verification of my fondest hopes, I stopped to admire and caress this beauty. Yes, this is truly a trout—and in Germany. I lay my tape-line on him, and he reaches eighteen inches from the snout to tip of tail. He is not so deep as an American trout of that length, but, altogether, built for a long and gamey resistance. As is my custom, I take the time now to see what his diet list consists of, in order to better please his friends whom I hope to interview. I find in his stomach small, very small, black flies, and I at once open my fly-book and place a good sample of this kind on my casting-line, in the hope that it will conform to the trout *menu* of to-day, although I observe only a large yellow fly fluttering occasionally on the water, but the swallows are picking them up in their flight. I soon find that the diet I present to them is quite as pleasing as any other, for the flies no sooner touch the water before there is a rush and a dash from two or three directions, and at my third cast have the dropper taken, while the trout on my leader is making a fine dance at his "surprise party," which I have just afforded him. I land them both safely, the "gaffer" getting the larger one into the net, and the smaller one he scrapes out with his big wooden shoe, scolding and talking Dutch all the while, much to my amusement.

Having made a successful cast or two below the cascade, I now follow up the stream where it winds through a beautiful green meadow, where the hay has just been cut and is still lying on the ground, for half a mile. There is a hawthorn hedge growing on one side, and on the other there is an occasional small tree. What a stream for fly-casting, especially at this very time! The surface is being momentarily broken by the rising of fine trout.

Ben has already whipped this part of the stream, and passed on up into the defile in the mountains, from where the stream emerges, but there are plenty more here that are over their scare and gone to feeding again. I cast and strike, losing no time, as the gaffer is now more careful in landing and disengaging my fish. The harvest hands leave their work and come across the field, and are much delighted at the success with which I am meeting. I move on soon, as they come too close to the stream, and frighten the fish away, as they have ceased to rise.

One of the men, a dark, wild-looking fellow, I

spied across the stream, beckoning to me and pointing through the hedge into the stream, where he saw fish lying. I paid no attention to him, until finally I observed he had his hand full of big stones, which he was anxious to throw in to drive the trout up to my line. He at last, in spite of me, effected his assistance, as he considered it; and I, much amused at his innocence, consequently moved on into the forest, where I overtook Ben. We had now been fishing about two hours, and on suggesting that we should see how many fish we had, Ben instructed the lads to show them in a pile. They did so with delight, and I will not tell you how many we had already, as it might pardonably be considered a tough trout story; but suffice it to say that I, with much earnestness, told Ben at once, while my face burned with shame, that we must stop fishing, or the Baron would naturally think that we were abusing his courtesy in taking such numbers. We, however, had a good hearty laugh at one another and our droll embarrassment, the gaffers watching our conversation narrowly, but not understanding a word we said. Ben instructed them to take a dozen of the finest to the Baron at once; a lot more to the little hostelry where we were stopping, to be cooked for our dinner; and to give the rest to the harvesters in the meadow below. I was unhappy while such a pile of trout lay before me so early in the day.

We chatted awhile under the shade of a stately old elm by the edge of the forest, and agreed to go at it again, and to throw the fish back after catching them. The gaffers came back at length, with the word that we were welcome to catch all we could, and my gaffer was soon after much incensed at me for my determination in throwing them back. I could understand him to be telling me in German that the particular fish I had thrown in was a *schœna forellen* (pretty trout) and very good to eat, and that if I didn't want them he would take them (and I suspected he would sell them too). Thus the days went on, and happy days they were. Our visit was doubtless a boon to many of the honest German peasants, who are never allowed to cast a line into any of these beautiful streams, or interfere with the trout in any way; and through us they had a feast upon them, and we a successful and delightful time, such as is rarely the lot of pair of wandering sportsmen to enjoy. And now, as I complete this imperfect sketch of our trip, in the beautiful and hospitable city of Dublin, the metropolis of the gallant and valorous Irish people, I feel, this beautiful sunny morning, as though the most desired spot on earth to me to-day is in the glorious land of the ancient Cheruskiens, the modern Westphalia, where the music of the limpid Hunne rises in a thousand notes from dancing waterfall and cascade, and the *schœna forellen* (pretty trout) lie in waiting in the little eddies and shades for the struggling fly, ready even to attack and struggle themselves with anything coming their way that bears a fair resemblance to their adopted diet.

A greeting, and our thanks again to Baron Von Duiker, and our warmest sentiments of regard and lasting friendship to that noble, genial, kind gentleman sportsman, Herr Peter Krieger, from his grateful friend, the writer.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XLIV.—BY NIGHT.

OLD Matt Space had a certain amount of pride in his composition, and, like most people, he suffered for it. He would gladly have received assistance of the most trifling nature from Septimus Hardon the day they returned from Finsbury; but his companion seemed so dejected and doleful that he had not the heart to bring forward his own troubles; and so it followed that the same night he was complaining to himself about hard times—those ever-recurring, inhospitable seasons when mental storms beat upon the rocks of a man's faith, and many a shipwreck follows. Hard times—times that the science, charity, and statistics of our days soften so little. Warm sunshine, genial rain, bright skies, have but little influence, and the times keep hard for some, though others, by means of softening mediums, contrive to remain uninjured.

In his dry way, old Matt would sometimes say that if he did not cut up well when he died he should certainly cut up streaky—like thin bacon; for times so fluctuated with him that before a small layer of fat was well established the lean would again commence; while, if it is fair so to speak of a man whose life had been one long struggle for bare existence, Matt had been somewhat improvident. What he called runs upon the bank were common events with the old printer—times when there were no deposits made, and trade was slack. It was a pleasant trade, printing, he said—nothing to do to-day, and to-morrow busy, up all night afterwards, and then perhaps another long rest.

Old Matt stood in front of the Royal Exchange that night at eleven o'clock, weak from his long illness, tired and faint too, as he lingered there thinking of how he would like to make an onslaught upon the Bank of England, and fill his pockets, now reduced to the lowest ebb, for he had not sixpence wherewith to pay for a night's lodging. He had not been to the mansion of Mr. Gross to sleep but once since his return from the hospital; for he was largely indebted to that gentlemen, and though scarcely anything had been said, Mrs. Gross had dropped just a mild hint—what she considered an exceedingly mild hint—to the effect that, when it was convenient, they would be glad to receive one or two instalments on account.

This made Matt more shy, and after a day or two he stopped away altogether; so that when Septimus Hardon sought him at his lodgings, he found him not, and had to inspect the interior of two or three hostelries favoured by the fraternity before he discovered him.

"Ah, sir," said Matt, as he hugged a lamp-post, "the times that I've seen them lugging the little chests and barrels in there—heavy so that they could scarcely lift them, and any one of 'em would have set me up for life. Specie, they call it, sir; specie as I was always unable to collect much of in my rambles through life; and it wouldn't take a deal to make me comfortable, anyhow. Precious cold here, sir, for an old man like me; and I don't know that I'd say no, just now, to one of those little

iron bedsteads, with its clean sheets, in the hospital—leastways, if one could feel sure nobody had just died upon it, for the thought of that gives one a turn like, and seems to fidget. Precious cold, sir! Talk about the internal heat of the earth, I wish there was a little more external. Crust of the earth, sir? Yes, sir, there's plenty of crust, and precious little crumb. Red-hot fluid state inside, eh? Then I shall move, sir—move. I had a good mind to when I was in the hospital; but I think I shall make up my mind soon, for the world aint safe—a volcanic, earthquaky place. I shall flit, as they say down north.

"Cold, cold, cold, sir!" shivered the poor old fellow, after a pause, as he looked down the long deserted City streets, that teemed so with busy life in the daytime. "That scamp of a valet never reminded me of my greatcoat—a scoundrel. Thinks a deal more of his own confounded self, sir, than he does of his master. Now, look here, sir—There; I know, of course—it's all right; I'm a-going on, I am. 'Move on,' says you; but make the most of it, old chap; for you won't have me to move on much longer."

The old man spoke sadly, as an approaching policeman cut short his address; but he went on before he could be told, and made his way slowly down into Cannon-street, where he stopped before another post.

"Now, look here, sir," said Matt, as though he had not been interrupted for an instant, "we want an establishment here in town—a club for gentlemen in my position to-night—where we could go and have a basin of hot tea or coffee, or gruel if you like, and a decent, dry, clean, warm bed under shelter, without going to the workhouse. Now, sir, when my ship comes in, I mean to establish just such a place, and make it self-supporting. None of your casual wards in workhouses, but a decent place, where honest people can go and do their bit of work over night or in the morning, to earn their bed and board. Let the idle vagabonds and tramps, sir, go to the casual ward; for there's hundreds of decent people in town every night would be glad to do a bit of work and get their meal and bed. Seems hard, sir," said Matt, pitifully, as the cold night wind swept down the street, and he shivered miserably, "seems hard, sir, that in this great place, where the wealth is almost running over the side, things are so that an old chap like me should stand here to-night, as I've stood scores of times before, wanting the work and means for a meal and bed, and not able to get 'em. Now, let's see, sir; what shall we call my place? Hotel? No, that's too fine and grand. Home? Well, no; that sounds like humbugging the poor creatures. 'There's no place like home!' I wish I was at home, I do," shivered the old man. "There, now, there it is again! Another policeman. Public streets, indeed! Aint I one of the public, and haven't I a right to be in them? Strange thing a man can't address a few words in confidence to a friend without one of these fellows sticking his nose in. There, I'm a-going. I aint going to commit a burglary upon the post, and walk off with the gas. I wish there wasn't a policeman on the face of the blessed earth! I'm

a-going." And, in obedience to the wag of the constable's head, the old man walked on towards London-bridge; but before he was halfway there, he made another stoppage beneath a lamp.

"Now, policemen are all very well, sir," he said, "but they're too officious. Now, what did that chap do but put a stop to as fine a bit of philanthropy as was ever devised for the benefit of humanity at large? Only think, now, of the crowds of poor folks flocking there of a night! There's your proper officers to see that there's neither talking nor noise; there's your clean kitchen, with its great soup-coppers, and rows upon rows of mugs and basins; there's your dormitories, with their long ranges of beds, every one separate, clean hay in ticks, and a couple of warm rugs; place heated by hot-water pipes, and all orderly and regular—a place for sleep and rest, and no one allowed to disturb it; baths and washhouses attached, and every chance given for a poor creature to get rest, refreshment, and a rinse—the three graces of every-day life, sir. Open always, sir, until it was full; while the fact of a good, fair bit of work being done first or after would keep a good many of the canting casuals away. I mean to say, sir," said Matt, "that it might be made self-supporting after the first start; and such a place for the male and female poor of London, sir, would be an honour to the people. Now then, once more, sir, what shall we call it? 'Hotel' won't do; 'home' won't do; 'hospital' sounds too sickly. Tell you what, sir; we'll call it 'Space for All,' in honour of its projector. Why, confound it, sir, I'd have it got up by a penny subscription, if my ship happened to sink and I couldn't do it myself. And mind you, sir, I'm not going to have my money fooled away in a grand architectural building, where all the space is taken up by rooms for the officers; I want it all for the poor privates, the soldiers fighting in the war of life. I'm not going to have all my money spent in outside show; I want it for furnishing and the inside—furnishing the inside of the building and the inside of the people. I want something plain and useful, clean and simple, with kind, quiet, firm people to attend, and see that things go right, and guard against imposition. But there, sir, we should be safe to be imposed upon some time or another, more or less; but then look at the good we should do. Ah! you may well twinkle, and laugh, and blink, old fellow, for that would be something like a job done, and one worth talking about."

Old Matt gave the lamp a parting slap, and shuffled on towards the bridge, where he stopped in one of the recesses, and tried to get himself into a comfortable position.

"Ugh-h-h, how cold these seats are! Rich corporation like the City too, and not have the decency to put a few cushions for a poor fellow! Just like to put stone seats round the table on Lord Mayor's Day. Wonder how the aldermen, sheriffs, and Common Council would like it! Spoil their appetites, I know!"

"There," said he, after a while, as he looked over the parapet, and down at the stone steps leading to the water, "that would be a more quiet place than this, and more quiet and sheltered. There's t'other

steps leading down to Thames-street there; but then there's sure to be a dozen more, and I aint fond of company. But a fellow must sleep somewhere; so where shall it be—steps, 'Delphi arches, or the Park? Park's too far off, and the ventilation too powerful, seeing as there's so much water to cool the wind—makes it chilly sometimes. Rather like the Park, though; something respectable about it; genteel neighbours, soldiers on duty; air sweet; water clean. But there's the rails to get over, and I aint up to rails to-night; and, besides, they tear. But there, with this suit, I could stand a tear or two as well as any one; and I don't s'pose I could tell myself which was the new slit if the spear-head of the rail wasn't in it. Down the steps is all very well; but the company aint select, and you run the risk of being robbed. So you do down the arches; but then there's something suitable about them—handy to work in the morning. That's the spot for me, so here goes. Pity I came all this way, though, now the penny boats don't run."

But the weary old man seemed in no hurry to move; for, with his chin resting upon his hands, he stopped, gazing down into the hurrying black stream far beneath—black and stealthy as it hurried through the arches, lamps here and there twinkling and showing like blurred stars in the swift waters; and a stealthy, gliding race was that of the river as it bore along its stolen secrets towards the sea—secrets unknown to those who watched from far above; but there were rich spoils and treasures, dropped from the side of lighter and vessel, swept out of sewers; secrets, too, of life and death; and now and then something strange and bloated and sodden was whirled round, to rise to the surface and stare up, as if appealing with its lack-lustre eyes to the star-sprinkled heaven above—gazing fearfully upwards, but swept round again the next moment by the eddy, and forced on by the hurrying stream, dashed against prow, borne under slimy keel, forced savagely and entangled amongst chains, thrown upon mud-banks, and left by the tide half buried in the black ooze; swept clear again, and borne off up the river, down the river, scraping along bridge-pier or stone wharf, buttress or caisson, ever hideous, bloated, horrible—these of the river secrets glided along.

"Ah!" muttered Matt, softly, "who can say that there is poverty here in London, when everywhere the gold is looking out of the great works in which it has been sunk? There are ships, ships, ships, and steamer, lighter, and barge; and how many of 'em loaded with what I should call a large fortune!"

And now with a sigh he leaned his forehead upon his hand, and gazed along the river at the dimly-seen wharves and warehouses, with here and there a light flashing from the river. Then he thought of his own weary life, of Septimus Hardon and his sorrows, pondering long upon the ill-success that had attended their efforts, and seeing too plainly how ineffective they had been; and then he sighed again loudly, and started, for a small hand was laid firmly upon his shoulder with a tight clutch, and, turning quickly round, there, with the light of the gas shining full upon it, he saw, as it were, the face

of an angel, seen through the thin veil of sin and misery that sullied its beauty—a beauty that still clung to features fair and girlish.

The strange couple gazed earnestly at one another for a few moments, when the girl spoke, huskily—

"You weren't thinking of that, were you?"

"Thinking of what, my lass?" said Matt, quietly.

"Going over?" said the girl, with almost a sob, and at the same time catching his wrist and holding it with both hands tightly, as he tried to withdraw it, while her nostrils seemed to distend, and her breath came heavily as she held him firmly, fearing lest her words might prompt him to the desperate leap.

"No, no, my lass, no," said Matt wearily, as he sank in a sitting posture upon the stone seat. "I have thought of such a thing—time back; but not lately. I have thought that it would be putting an end to a weary way when one gets very footsore, and that no one would miss a poor, worn-out fellow like me; but I've thought better of it, and I'll wait till I'm called, my lass. I was only thinking a bit."

"You looked as if you meant to," said the girl, loosing his wrist, and kneeling upon the seat in the very attitude the old man had taken a short time before. "But one can't help thinking of it sometimes, and almost feeling as if the river drew you, like. It seems as if you'd go to sleep then, and wake no more. Not much to leave here, is there?" she added, slowly.

Old Matt shook his head, and, leaning forward unseen by his companion, he took a firm hold of her dress; for the girl went on dreamily, as she looked down on the black water—

"I saw one of our girls once; she went off Waterloo, and they got her out, and she looked so quiet and happy like. But there," she added, in a reckless, off-hand way, "I sha'n't do it—I haven't the heart. There, you needn't hold me, old man;" and she snatched her dress from his grasp.

A deep, hollow cough checked her for a few minutes; and Matt sat in the cold recess gazing on the slight, graceful form, as the well-dressed girl knelt upon the seat—frail, fair, and apparently not twenty.

"Lend me threepence, old man," she exclaimed, suddenly, as she turned to him.

"What for?" said Matt.

"Glass of brandy," said the girl, holding her hand pressed to her side, and then battling hard once more with her cough.

"I haven't a halfpenny left," said Matt, drearily, "or I shouldn't be sitting here, my lass. But you're better without the brandy, and there's no place open now."

"There! I don't want your money, old man," said the girl; "only one gets so used to asking, it comes natural. Are you hard up?"

"Yes," said Matt, drearily, "close as I can be."

"Here!" she exclaimed, holding out sixpence. "You may as well have it, as for me to take it back."

The old man stared at his companion for a moment, and then raised his hand to take the money, but he suddenly lowered it again.

"No, my lass, no," he said; "thank you all the same, but I can do without it."

The girl's eyes flashed as she looked angrily at the old man, and then, raising her hand, she dashed the money over the parapet, and sank down upon the seat, sobbing violently.

"There!" she exclaimed, passionately, as Matt spoke soothingly to her; "I know, and I deserve it all. I wish I was dead—I wish I was dead!"

"I didn't mean to hurt you," said Matt, kindly. "Now go home, my lass, and try and forget it."

"Home!" said the girl, with a forced, mocking laugh. "Yes, when it's time. Good night, old man. You didn't meet Marian, did you?"

"Who?" said Matt, absently.

"Marian," said the girl; "I'm looking for her. But you don't know her—good night."

And she went lightly off, humming the snatch of a popular air as she went towards the City; while, after waiting until the girlish form had disappeared, old Matt rose himself and began to shuffle back the same way as he had come; looking longingly at a passing hay-cart bound for the market, and thinking of the fragrant stack whence the load had been taken, and how pleasant it would have been to have dragged out a heap to nestle in. For the old man was cold, weary, and ill; and as he slowly shuffled along, many a thought of those who rested upon luxurious couches came to his mind. He crossed the great echoing cathedral yard, and passed slowly from gaslight to gaslight, too weary now to talk. Now and then he would encounter a policeman, who turned to look after the slow, shambling figure. At intervals, a cab would rattle by him, while once, with its hollow, heavy rumble, a fire-engine dashed by, the light flashing back from the shining helmets of the firemen; then there was a short, rushing vision of something red covered with figures, and drawn by two steaming, plunging horses, a faint dying away of the hurrying wheels, and then all still once more; for it was now the most silent hour of the whole twenty-four in great London. Dull and dreary looked the streets, with hardly a wayfarer in sight, and those, perhaps, women who paced wearily along or talked noisily to a companion. But no one heeded Matt as he still shuffled onward, more than once as he passed through Fleet-street gazing up at the gas-lit windows of the newspaper offices.

Past Lower Serle's-place, looking in the dark night like the mouth of a sewer, emptying itself by the bridge—Temple Bar; past Essex-street, to stand and gaze down it for a few moments thoughtfully; past the last of the four churches, and the street leading to the "Bridge of Sighs." Onward still, and then into one of those hilly lanes, up which in busy day came clattering the heavy teams of waggon-horses with their black load—down one of those river lanes along which came sighing the damp-laden winds, whispering of being lost upon the great stream, and of having wandered from the green trees, where in summer the reeds rustled, and the silver water glided past emerald banks—whispering of cooling groves, and the gladdening, sparkling, dancing wavelets, sheltered woody islets, and the sweet, pure country air; but now lost in wintry weather upon the breast of the great river—lost, after wandering by muddy pile

and slimy, horrid, loathsome drain and sullyng sewer; lost, as they had swept past wharf, bridge, pier, and barge; they came in despair, weeping tears from their misty burden, sweeping amongst the gloomy houses, and causing a shiver as they passed along.

For a moment some bright recollection of the past seemed to strike the old man, and he paused thoughtfully beneath a gas-lamp; but old Matt's memories of waving reed and rustling tree were few, and he sighed and passed on, thinking only of his sought-for resting-place. Onward, and down beneath the great, black, yawning arch, to where he could hear voices, while above the faint damp fever-reek of the place came the fumes of tobacco smoke. On still, with hands outstretched to avoid collision with cart or waggon; but more than once he tripped over a shaft, as some stabled horse rattled halter or chain through the ring of its manger, and Matt sighed with envy as he thought of the warm straw.

To a miserable fire at length, with several miserable objects huddled round, and amidst jest, laughter, and foul language, a voice yelled out a verse or two of a current song, a man and woman dancing hard by, their shadows cast, wildly distorted and grotesque, upon the reeking brickwork, where they almost seemed to cling. Then, too, came that peculiar "glug-glug" sound of liquid passing from a bottle, and a voice shouted to the old man—

"Come on, matey; heaps o' room to-night. Give's a pipe o' baccy."

"All right," replied Matt, backing into the darkness, and shaking his head, as he shuffled hurriedly along till he reached the Strand once more.

"Can't stand that now," muttered Matt; "nerves too weak. No idea there was such a pressure of business in the hotel. Foreign gentleman that, dancing—wonder whether his organ's down there."

Heavily, listlessly, and with drooping head, old Matt walked slowly back towards the City, now stopping in a doorway, or resting leaning against a shutter; but soon to shuffle on again, as his heart seemed to whisper, "Oh, that it were day once more!"

Tramp, tramp through the silent streets of the great wilderness. Thoughtful after a strange, numbed, weary mode, the old man made his way into Thames-street, looking hopelessly about the while for some dry, sheltered spot, where, unnoticed by the police, he might coil up, as hundreds do nightly in our streets, trying to forget the present as they wait for the desolate future.

At last, less particular now, he was nearing the dry arch of London-bridge, and thinking of the steps as a place to rest his aching bones, when from his half-sleepy state he suddenly roused up, for down from a turning in front came a couple of policemen with a stretcher, while, hurried and excited in her manner, her hair lank and curless with the dank night wind, followed the poor girl he had seen upon the bridge, now talking earnestly to one of the constables.

The new-comers did not notice Matt, and after walking onwards for a short distance, with the old man closely following, they suddenly turned down between two large piles of warehouses, along a narrow passage, up which came the odour of the river

borne on the moaning wind, where the rugged, broken pavement was wet and slimy.

There was no feeling of fatigue and misery now to bear down the old man, as, led by some impulse, he followed the police, his heart beating wildly as he glanced at the stretcher and recalled the hospital. There was something weird and strange-looking in the oil-caped figures as, seen in the misty darkness, they passed along; and the eager voice of the girl sounded hollow and echoing. Down to the river-side, where the muddy water could be heard rushing amidst the floating piers and moored barges, with a hurried, whispering, secret sound—here where barge and lighter were moored closely together and steamers were buoyed, waiting for the coming day. High warehouses towered above them, with cranes jutting out, gallows-like, at intervals, as if just deprived of some malefactor's body that had swung to the chain, and then dropped in the river to be swept away. Piles were driven thickly here; slimy, mysterious-looking stone steps led down into the water, right down into its secret, muddy depths; and an old boat or two floated hard by, secured by small chains, which rattled backwards and forwards over their gunwales as the tide lifted, and bore them to and fro in its ebbing and flowing and eddying currents.

But there was light here, sparsely shed over the scene by a single flickering lamp, whose panes seemed bedewed with tears. The pale blue flame jumped and danced, burning bluely as it was nearly extinct, and then flashed up again with regular throbs, from water collected in the pipe. And now as Matt drew nearer, he saw the light flash from the shiny wet cape of another policeman, standing talking to a couple of nondescript waterside men in Guernsey shirts and heavy mudlark boots, who stood leaning against the mooring-posts and smoking hard; while all three seemed to be keeping vigil over something lying upon the ground, covered with an old sack and some matting, upon whose uncouth form the blinking gaslight looked down; now showing its shudder-engendering proportions, now leaving it all but in darkness. But as the light flashed, there was a tiny trickling stream sluggishly flowing from beneath the sack, in a tortuous way, to the edge of the landing-place, where it dripped slowly, with a little echoing plash, into the running waters, which beat against the stones, and leaped, and rose, and fell with a monotonous lap-lap, as if seeking to rise and drag back the secret taken from their bosom.

It was strange, but far off in the country, in Somesham town, Doctor Hardon clenched his hands and groaned in his sleep, as the perspiration stood in big beads upon his forehead; but though in his dream he saw the stern faces of his brother and nephew, and went through the churchyard scene once more, it was, perhaps, merely a fit of indignation, or on account of certain speculations which had threatened to prove failures, even though, after his fashion, he had made vows at his conscience-shrine, and promised to seek out his lost child, and to do something for Septimus Hardon should they succeed.

And 'twas strange, too, that Mrs. Doctor Hardon should wake up with a wild cry from an oppressing

slumber, and then, trembling from a strange sense of dread, cry hysterically, and lie for hours thinking of her child. Strange, perhaps; but such things have been.

The policemen stopped, and set down their stretcher, saying something in an undertone to their fellow; the two men smoking left their posts, and, beneath the lamp, the girl leaned against the wall, trembling visibly, as again and again she coughed and pressed her hand against her heaving chest.

Old Matt drew nearer and nearer, his claw-like fingers working convulsively, as if to tear off the wet covering before him; his head was craned forward, his dry lips parted, and then he stopped short as one of the men stooped and lifted the sack, so that the light flashed across a pale face "dreadfully staring through muddy impurity," for with a wild, wailing cry, the girl started forward and threw herself on her knees, sobbing bitterly; and the men, hardened though they were to such scenes, fell back a step or two, with some show of respect for the sorrow before them.

The wind moaned and sighed, and mingled with the poor girl's cries; the chains rattled noisily; and the waters seemed to leap and dash angrily at the steps, rising higher and higher minute by minute, fearful of losing their prey; while Matt stole nearer and nearer, trembling in every limb—nearer and nearer still, with his eyes fixed upon that pale, staring face, till a policeman laid a hand upon his breast to stay him from interrupting the mourner's sorrow; but, putting back the hand, Matt pressed on, with a chaos of thoughts hurrying through his brain, bright amongst which seemed to shine forth the face of Lucy Grey, as, stooping lower, he now looked down upon this countenance which he had, ere now, seen raised wildly and appealingly to his, when he had gruffly talked of time, and then, shivering as if stricken with some paralyzing seizure, he gasped, almost to himself—

"It's that poor girl!"

Poor Man's Market.

THE Londoner, who at this time of year is perchance at a loss to discover something he has never seen before in this great metropolis, should pay a visit to the cattle market at Islington. On Mondays and Thursdays—on those days only—we may observe cattle and sheep being driven through the streets of London. These are the market days at Islington. The market begins very early, and at ten o'clock the gates are closed, and no cattle are allowed to be driven through the London streets again that day except after six o'clock in the evening. Every Friday in the year a very different market is held among the pens at the Islington Cattle Market. This begins at one and lasts up to six exactly, when the great bell announces the time for a general clearance. We feel certain that few of our readers are aware of this most curious phase of civilization existing amongst us. It is the market for the poor, the moderately poor, the out-of-work people, the very poor, and especially for the London coster-

mongers—quite a class among themselves. At this market almost every conceivable article used by civilized man can be purchased, at prices ranging from one penny to twenty pounds. The articles sold in this market are rarely new; they are second-hand—we may almost say third or fourth hand. To this place, in fact, gravitate the shreds and the refuse of Great London and its vicinity—the “jetsam and flotsam” of this huge city.

On entering the northern gate, we find the pen which on cattle market days is occupied by the calves devoted to the sale of old, very old, clothes. These garments are mostly, if not altogether, feminine, and the customers belong to the gentler sex. The sellers are women. There are four of them in the same calves' pen, one at each corner, each with a bundle of clothes before her. She picks up an article of dress, and sells it by Dutch auction. She starts with two shillings: “Child's jacket for two shillings, fur and all.” After a great deal of chaff, and wrangling as to the worth and condition of the article, she tosses it over the heads of the bystanders to some customer for the large sum of fourpence. In the other corners are selling babies' half-worn shoes, old caps and bonnets, gowns, jackets, shawls—in fact, the contents of an ordinary rag-shop. If these garments could only speak, what tales of misery and starvation they could tell. It is a curious thing, if one of these saleswomen, after putting an article once up for sale, ever puts it down on the ground unsold, she will never pick it up or take money for it that day.

In the interspace between the rest of the calves' pens are allotments of ground for which the holders pay sixpence a day. Laid out on the bare paving-stones may be seen a most curious conglomerate of household goods, all in a broken and dilapidated state. We attempt a catalogue—a bunch of rusty horse-bits, broken bird cages, chairs without legs, old clocks, chairs without bottoms, rusty nails of all sizes and shapes, lids of saucepans, birds' eyes, clock weights, bell pulls, glass stoppers for bottles, broken fishing-rods, piles of old boots and shoes one would have thought long past service, buckles, old straps, stirrups, old saddles, empty physic bottles, bits of broken looking-glass, oil bottles, odd volumes of books, bits of stair carpet, oil-cloth, &c., &c., besides cough-drops, medicines for rheumatism, and patent nostrums of all sorts and descriptions.

In order to attend to the commissariat of the thousands of people who attend this market, are here to be met vendors of baked potatoes hot from the can, huge deep sea oysters fresh from the sea, whelks, mussels, cockles, stale buns, sherbet, ginger beer, sheeps' trotters, ham sandwiches, cold fried fish and bread for a penny, hot sausage and bread for three-halfpence. The articles of food for sale are really fresh and in excellent condition, as these dealers know quite well that neither the poor man nor his wife will buy any food that is really not of excellent quality.

At the end of the avenue we come to the poultry market. Here on a fine day can be seen for sale immense quantities of live fowls, ducks, geese, turkeys, pigeons, &c. Some of these birds are of the very best possible kind—some are of the very worst.

Irish ducklings can be bought at fourteen or fifteen pence each. They are of course very thin, but yet they are bought up by the poor with the idea of fattening them for home consumption. Irish goslings are sold in large numbers, and fetch from half-a-crown to three shillings each. “Widows,” *alias* old hens, are to be bought at a shilling each. Most of these widows are sold by the hawker from the hand, as it would be a dangerous experiment to let them try to stand on their feet. They might betray their age and infirmities. In the spring of the year these bird-dealers have an ingenious device of dressing up the combs of old hens, so as to give them the appearance of birds in full lay.

Adjoining the poultry market is offered for sale a lot of German hen canaries. At this time of the year large crates containing small cages of German canaries come to this country. These birds are all hens. In the market they are, of course, warranted all cock birds. They fetch, cage and all, from one to two shillings each. The German dealers do not send over the cock canaries yet—not until they are clean-moulted and in song. These birds are not sold in the streets, but in shops, where they fetch from 4s. 6d. to 6s. each. They begin to appear in London in the month of November. Alongside the poultry are cages containing birds and a few “monk” parrots. “Monk” parrots are sickly parrots, which have caught cold on their passage to the wholesale dealers in Liverpool, London, &c. Grey monk parrots were being sold at five to six shillings each. Had they been healthy birds, each would have been worth a pound.

Adjoining the canary stalls the market is occupied by rows of costermongers' barrows, new and second-hand, all for sale. There are also carriage and truck wheels and springs in abundance; in some cases there are only portions of wheels. The spokes of wheels are much used for the rounds of ladders, and are well fitted for the purpose. There are also numbers of carts containing live pigs; these are sold by higglers or pig jobbers, who go round the country collecting them. The pig market can always be found by the noise the pigs incessantly make.

The eastern side of the market is devoted to old harness. There may be seen here old hansoms, broken-down four-wheelers, carts and vans of every age, shape, and description. We were much struck with the collection of the metal portions of what once had been first-class harness, especially the coronets, intricate monograms, coats of arms, and other heraldic devices: these had been taken off old harness which had seen better days. These metal armorial bearings were polished up equal to new, and really looked beautiful.

Near this carriage department we come upon a lively scene—namely, the horse market. In this department are to be found goats young and old, but the poor things were in very bad condition. Some Nannies are sold as milkers, and a most ingenious device is used by the dealers to give old goats the appearance of being in full milk. A very young, innocent-looking kid of another goat plays a prominent, but not willing, part in this transaction. Almost every description of goat is to be found amongst them. The large male goats are bought

for stables where many horses are kept. We believe the reason of this is that goats will run from fire, and the horses will follow them out of the stable should it catch fire. Goats are sometimes used as food, and in some cases sold for venison.

Jerusalems, *alias* living donkeys, are plentiful in the market. Just now mokes, as they are called, are at a discount, owing to many circumstances—to wit, the winter is coming on, the lively time of the year is nearly over, and there is no more demand for mokes to assist at the seaside, children riding, school treats, excursions, bean feasts, &c. In the spring of the year, on the contrary, good donkeys, also small ponies, fetch high prices from the gipsies. The gipsies frequent places such as Epping Forest, Hampton Court, and the suburbs of London resorted to by school treats, &c., and make a deal of money by providing donkey rides. Good working donkeys are in the spring worth £3 to £4 each. In the autumn a good donkey can be got from £1 to 50s. Donkeys are largely used during the busy fruit season by the costermongers. But many of them cannot afford to keep a donkey during the winter, so that next month donkeys will be very cheap.

In the horse market a large business is done. Those principally sold are screws, such as kickers, jibbers, roasters, broken-winded animals, bolters, and bad tempers. Every infirmity to which horseflesh is liable may be here found represented. Among the horses are some fine specimens of racks—that is, fleshless horses, simply skin and bone. They are principally bought up by the knackers, not for the flesh, but for what they really are, for the skin and bone. Every portion of a rack not sold for cat's-meat is of some value to the knacker. The ultimate destination of the horses—not racks—for sale is the carts of costermongers and little tradesmen.

The transactions in horse-dealing are principally done by horse-copers, and, *caveat emptor*, previous to being sent into the market the horses are dressed, made up, well fed, and well thrashed to cow their vicious faults; and it is wonderful what alteration this treatment makes in them for a short time, but for a short time only. When tied up for sale the horses are certainly not kindly used, being kept awake and lively by sticks or whips. Old horses are apparently turned into young ones by judicious trimming, grooming them, and feeding up according to their ailments and infirmities. In old horses there is a deep pit above the eye, but by an ingenious process of inflating with air this pit is made to fill up, and the treatment lasts some considerable time.

Adjoining the market there are sales which take place weekly of Russian and other foreign ponies. They are sold by auction in large numbers. These ponies are strong, serviceable animals, and are received here without shoes on their hind feet. This is, of course, to prevent them kicking and injuring each other when in the hold of the steamer that brings them over from Russia. These horses and ponies are bought up by speculators in numbers varying from forty to fifty, and are taken round to country fairs. They fetch from seven to twelve guineas each. Altogether the Islington market on a Friday is a most curious and interesting sight. Take a tram from the top of Tottenham-court-

road to the Brecknock Arms, you will be within two minutes' walk of the market. The best time to go is a Friday when the weather is fine. The height of the market is about four o'clock.

Fishing in Finland.

YOU may remember that in my letter last autumn from Finland I spoke of an immense trout, "as large as a donkey," that had snapped innumerable lines, broken innumerable rods, and devoured innumerable artificial minnows; and I told you that I was "going for that fish next summer." Well, I went for him, and if I did not get him, I got his younger brother, evidently a chip of the same block. He weighed twenty pounds. What do you think of that for a brook trout?

The happy event took place at midnight on the 27th ultimo. I had been fishing on and off all day, with indifferent success. We tried it again at nine p.m., with no great luck. At eleven we returned to the club-house, to see some friends off who meant to post all night to catch the morning train at Wiborg for Petersburg. As soon as they had gone we went upon the lake again. I had hardly got my totness fairly into the water when it was struck by a fish. He made so little fuss that I thought it must be a small one, and announced to my Finnish boatman that he was "mola," which is choice Russian for "small." After a while, however, he began to show more life, and soon he made my reel hum. It was not till I had him alongside of the boat, however, that I realized what a whale he was. When my boatman gaffed him, he had to sit down in the boat and seize the gaff with both hands to hoist him in.

But truth compels me to say that, as far as my experience goes, these big fish do not give the play of smaller ones. I caught several ten-pounders. They were much more gamey than my "donkey." One little fellow, it seemed to me, was as much out of the water as in it. He made at least a dozen leaps, and continued them until he was gaffed. Every time he leaped I lowered the point of my rod. This proceeding did not meet with the approval of my Finnish boatman, who signified his disapproval by a number of guttural sounds, of which the principal was "niet, niet," which is Russian for "no;" but I replied with an equally emphatic "da, da," which is good Russian for "yes;" for I had read in that very practically useful book, the "Sportsman's Gazetteer," that if a fish has the spirit to leap you should show your respect for his pluck by lowering the point of your rod to him. This is sound advice, and based upon good sense. His aim is evidently, by the suddenness of the blow, to tear the hook from his mouth. Slack up everything, and there is no tension, and your gentleman's well-designed plan is defeated.

My big fish was thought worthy of immortality, so he was laid upon the back piazza, which is the museum of the club, and his portrait outlined upon the floor, in the honoured company of the other hero fishes of the club—only two of which, by the way, were heavier, a 21 and a 22-pounder. Then I took a red lead pencil, and gave him mouth and eyes and fins of a beautiful carmine. My work

evidently excited the admiration of the natives, for they crowded round in numbers to see the progress of the picture, and their remarks, as translated to me, were complimentary to my artistic skill. The fish I brought to town. His monument stands upon the lonely shores of Lake Saima, carved in imperishable wood, *Perennium aere*, a proud witness to the skill of Yankee fishermen.

There has been remarkable fishing at Naraka this summer, showing that the prohibition of net fishing, and the close season from September 15 to January 1, have already done much to increase the number of fish, although the law is but two years old. The gentlemen who were at the club from July 1 to 15 caught so many and such large ones that they stopped from mere satiety. In the early part of July there is no night in these high latitudes—61 deg.; and, when I was there, there was not more than an hour or two of darkness, from half-past eleven to half-past one. I fished one night till two o'clock, and at that hour the east was quite bright with the coming dawn. The night is the best time for fishing, as long as the fish feed, but I do not think they feed much after midnight; then they rest, to begin feeding again very early in the morning. At night the bait deceives them more readily, and they probably do not see the boat and rod very distinctly.

I spent a Sunday at Naraka. The Fins are a church-going people—all Protestants. The people who live on the shores of the lake have several immense church-going barges. It is a very pretty sight to see them returning, men and women rowing, the women in their best dresses, the men with their coats off; and the white sleeves of the shirts and the high colours of the dresses contrast very beautifully with the wild wooded shore and dark water of the lake. They frequently break into song, and sing their church hymns, which are very plaintive. It seems to me that all Northern music is plaintive, perhaps from the hard lives the poor people lead. But, plaintive as it is, the effect is pleasing and interesting.

Education is compulsory in Finland, but is confined, as far as compulsion goes, to the simplest elements. It is in the hands of the clergy, and the power is not abused, for here they have no political objects in view. The clergy appear to me to be the most suitable teachers, provided you can be sure of their not interfering in politics. In France the priests unfortunately cannot be trusted with the education of the young, for any priest would have instructions from his ecclesiastical superiors to teach the doctrine of divine right and passive obedience, and would have to obey.

Finland is now in its beauty. The crops are green, the country is covered with the loveliest wild flowers, and with the strawberries in profusion by the roadside. The roads are excellent. But the great drawback seems to be the want of public conveyances. To go from place to place you must post. Though this is not expensive—only three cents a mile for cart, horse, and driver—it is a slow mode of travelling, for the horses are generally at work in the fields, or grazing in the woods, and have to be sent for and harnessed. All this takes time. They travel well—from eight to ten miles an

hour—but the delay at the stations makes your journey, after all, very slow.

The total result of my five days' fishing was as follows:—One fish of 20 lbs.; one 13 lbs.; three 10½ lbs.; one 8 lbs.; one 3½ lbs.; one 3 lbs.; and a multitude of a quarter and half pound trout, of which we take no note in Finland, but call it "fishing for the pot."

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.—Here is a story told by an unblushing correspondent. It is of the good old times, some fifty years ago, when they paid a premium on sparrows:—"In the village where I was born, the overseer of the poor was the person whose duty it was to pay the money for the sparrows' heads that were brought to him. It so happened that he was an elderly bachelor, and his mother (a very old and fastidious lady) kept house for him. He was generally absent on business during the day. Now, we boys would go and rob the sparrows' nests, get the heads of the young ones, wrap them up in a very dirty piece of paper, and take them to the overseer's house, of course knowing he was absent. The old lady would take them in her fingers as gingerly as if they were nitro-glycerine, give us our money (two cents for every three heads), and, as soon as we were gone round the corner, would throw them into the back yard. We would then watch the old lady, and, as soon as we were sure that she was in the front part of the house, one of us would slyly slip round to the back yard, pick up all the heads, and then, in about an hour or two, go back to the old lady and sell them over again. I have myself sold the same lot of heads to her four times in one day, and got the money for them. But boys will be boys, you know."

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XIX.—OVER THE TREASURE.



HAWSER was secured, and as the jolly-boat lay alongside, a second small anchor was lowered into her, and carried out and dropped on the other side, the rope hauled taut and made fast, and the schooner now moored in a position which the right current could not affect, though a storm would doubtless have made the anchors drag.

"That's my job 'bout done, capen

and Mr. Parkley, sirs. I said as I'd put the schooner over the spot; and there she is."

"But do you really think, Oakum—" began Mr. Parkley.

"I don't think nothing, sir. There's the place, and that 'ere's the rock as Pollo dived off into the deep water. Aint it, Pollo?"

"Dat's true, sah," cried the black, laughing boisterously.

"Then it's 'bout time I browt up the helmets and things, eh?" said Rasp, who had been looking on with inquiring eye.

"Not yet, Rasp," exclaimed Dutch, who now hurried to the side, and peered down into the brightly illumined depths, an example followed by the captain and half the crew.

The result was disappointing, and Dutch and Mr. Parkley descended into the boat, waiting till it was perfectly motionless, and then making use of a large tube which they thrust some feet down into the water, and gazed intently at the rocks, sands, and wonders of the sea below.

This process they followed up, as they slowly shifted the boat round from place to place; and each time that Dutch looked up to answer some question from the deck, it was to encounter the sinister face

of the mulatto, with the scar plainly marked in the sunlight, gazing intently down. For the matter of that, so was the face of Pollo, the other black, and the rest of the crew; but the countenance of the mulatto alone seemed to strike him, for the peculiarity of its looks, and the eagerness with which, in a partial way, its owner seemed to watch his every action.

"Well, gentlemen," said John Studwick, in a half mocking way, "can you see the El Dorado through that piece of brass pipe?"

"Not yet," said Dutch, quietly. And he went on with his research, seeing fish as brilliant as any he had before noticed, rocks covered with olive green and scarlet weed, that floated out and played in the water, many yards in length; great stones, covered with shells and acorn barnacles; sea anemones, whose petals were more delicately beautiful than any flowers he had beheld; but no trace of old ship timber, in the shape of ribs, sternpost, keel, or stem. Nothing but sand, rock, and seaweed; and at last the two sat up in the boat, and looked at one another.

"What's the good o' you humbugging?" said Rasp, on deck, to self-satisfied Oakum, who stood leaning his back against the bulwark, and staring at the landmarks by which he had found the spot.

"Who's humbugging?" said Oakum, roughly.

"Why, you. It's all sham. There aint no wreck below there."

"Bah! How do you know?" growled Oakum, "I know there is, but don't say as there aint been no one near and cleaned it out."

Hester was standing close by, and heard all this. Her face flushed with anxiety, and her heart rose and fell, as she listened to the opinions expressed about her, and thought of the bitter disappointment Dutch would feel if the search was without success.

Just then her husband said something hastily, which drew the attention of all on board; and, taking hold of a rope, she leaned forward to try and catch a glimpse of what was going forward, when she started back with a faint cry of alarm, for a pair of burning lips were placed upon her hand, and as she snatched it away, and faced round, it was to meet the glittering eyes of the mulatto fixed upon her, with so fiercely intense a gaze that she shrank away trembling, but not before he had whispered to her—

"Silence, if you value your life!"

She felt sick with horror as the man glided away, for the tones of his voice seemed familiar, and her very first impulse was to call to her husband; but the mulatto's words had such an effect on her, weakened as she was with long illness, that she dared not speak even to Bessy, to whose side she crept as an eager buzz of conversation went on.

For, after sitting thoughtfully in the boat for a few minutes, Dutch had leaned over the side once more, placing his face in the water, and gazed down at the beautiful submarine grove, when he saw a long, grey body pass slowly out from amongst the weeds, and woke to the fact that there were sharks in those waters, this creature being fourteen or fifteen feet long.

He shuddered at the sight, and thought of the helplessness of any diver if one of these monsters attacked him. He raised his face to breathe, and then looked down again, to see the monster part a bed of seaweed, and as it did so his past troubles were forgotten in the thrill of delight he felt: for Oakum was certainly right as to the wreck. As the shark glided slowly on, it parted the weeds more and more, leaving bare, plainly to be seen, what looked like a stump standing out of the sand, but which his experienced eye knew at once to be one of the ribs of a ship, black with age, where it was not grey with barnacles and other shells.

He rose from the water again, with his face dripping, inhaled a long breath, and once more softly stooped and peered down into the clear, ambient depths, where the waving seaweed and multitudinous growths seemed ever changing their colours as they waved gently in the current.

The weed parted by the shark had closed up together once more, and not a vestige seemed left of the piece of wreck wood; in fact, it might have been a dream, only that, close by where he had seen it before, half hidden in the weed, lay the shark, its long, unequal-lobed tail waving slightly to and fro a few moments, and then the monster was perfectly still—so quiet that the sharpest eye would have passed it unnoticed, so exactly was its back in hue like the sand upon which it lay.

But Dutch knew, dreamer as he had been, that this was no piece of imagination; and taking the tube once more, and recalling the peculiar bend of the piece of timber, he began again to examine the bottom, especially the portion that lay in the shadow cast by the schooner's hull. According to the bend of the timber, he knew that the wreck, if wreck it belonged to, must be lying in the opposite direction to the schooner; and tracing its imaginary shape, he concluded that there must be a succession of ribs embedded in the sand, though not visible in the lines he marked out with his eye.

And so it seemed, for as he looked he could make out that the weeds lay in thick clusters in the position they should occupy if they were attached to the timbers of an old ship. Huge mosses were there as well, forming quite a submarine forest, but evidently they took the form of a ship where they were most dense; and, to Dutch's great surprise, the vessel must have been one of nearly double the size of the schooner.

"See anything?" said Mr. Parkley, as the young man rose for a few minutes and wiped his brow.

"Yes," said Dutch, bluntly. "Shark!"

"Ah, there are plenty, no doubt," said Mr. Parkley.

But Dutch did not hear him, for he was once more eagerly trying to trace out in the weeds the shape of the old galleon.

Yes, there it was, undoubtedly; and, to make

assurance doubly sure, another shark slowly glided out, about thirty feet to the left of where Dutch saw the first, setting the weeds in motion, and displaying, black and grey with encrustations, three more of the nearly buried ribs of an old ship.

With this help to locality, he could now make out plainly where the galleon lay, and see that she must have been nearly a hundred feet long, and that her stem had struck on the mass of rocks described as those off which Pollo had dived; while her stern lay off behind the boat in the dense forest of sea growth. And as Dutch looked on he became more and more aware of the fact that there were watchers over the treasure—if treasure there was—in the shape of sharks. He had already seen two, and now, dimly visible in their lairs, lay no less than five more, of which he could just make out a fin of one, the snout of another, the tail of another, and so on, one gliding slowly out into the sunshine, turning right over so as to show its white belly and great teeth-armed jaws, before dashing after a shoal of bright-coloured fish which had tempted him from his lair.

So powerful were the strokes of the monster's tail, that the water was all of a quiver, and the long strands of the seaweed waved and undulated to and fro, displaying here and there more blackened stumps, and showing how possible it was for anyone to sail a boat over the wreck a hundred times without catching a glimpse or dreaming of its existence.

"Well," said Mr. Parkley, "when you're tired of shark gazing, we may as well go on board."

There was only one man of the crew looking over the side now, and that was the mulatto, who, with half-closed eyes, lazily watched their actions; the others, finding the business uninteresting, having adjourned to the shade.

"I'm ready to go on board," said Dutch, quietly. "When shall we begin work?"

"Oh, at once. Let's ask Studwick to weigh anchor, and try one of the other places. Ah, my lad, I'm afraid I let my anger get the better of my judgment. We shall do nothing without the cursed Cuban."

"Think not?" said Dutch, with a smile.

"I'm sure of it," said Mr. Parkley. "How can we hunt over the whole of this sea? It would be madness."

"I meant get to work with the apparatus," said Dutch, smiling.

"What are you laughing at?" said Mr. Parkley, impatiently.

"At your despondency," replied Dutch. "Old Oakum was right. We are lying right athwart the galleon."

"What!" cried Mr. Parkley, excitedly. "Nonsense!—you are half-mad."

"Over some things, perhaps," said Dutch, gloomily; "but sane enough over this. Mind, I don't say that there is any treasure there, but the old fellow has anchored us right across an old wreck."

"Give me that tube," cried Mr. Parkley, and he thrust it down into the water excitedly, looking in all directions.

"There's nothing there," he cried. "I examined that place before."

"But it did not occur to us that the weeds had grown up and hidden the timbers. Now, you watch that clump lying just under the schooner's keel. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes, I see."

"Then keep your eye upon it," said Dutch, as he crept softly to the bows of the jolly boat, and, taking one of half a dozen great boulders that were used for ballast, he heaved it overboard with a good splash, and then watched its effects.

As he expected, from half a dozen weed masses out darted as many sharks, to make a dash at the stone as it descended rapidly through the clear water, and first one and then another turned over to show its white underparts, before going away sulkily and in disgust.

"Well, what did you see?" said Dutch.

"Sharks! Ugh, the beasts!" exclaimed Mr. Parkley, with a shudder.

"What else?"

"Rough stumps of timber amongst the weeds."

"Timbers of the old galleon, no doubt, preserved by the shelly concretions that have formed upon them and held them together."

"But it's impossible, my dear boy. No man dare go down there; the sharks would rend him limb from limb. Who could go down?"

"I shall, for one," said Dutch, calmly. "So now let's get on board."

They climbed the side, and, as the news of their discovery spread through the ship, the excitement became great. Rasp began to bring up helmets and leaden weights, and ordered a couple of the men to come and assist with the air-pump, which had to be got up from below.

"But, my dear Dutch," [exclaimed] Mr. Parkley, in despair, "it is impossible—no one can go down."

"Not at present," said Dutch, smiling, as he looked round and saw that nearly everybody was gazing over the side. "Perhaps, when I have set the example, Rasp will not mind following it."

"But the sharks, my dear boy—they would tear you to pieces."

"Let them, if they can," said Dutch, grimly. "I'm not going to be deterred from the search by a few sharks. And if, as you say, I was torn to pieces," he added, bitterly, "what then?"

"I tell you, I shall not let you risk your life," said Mr. Parkley, firmly.

"And I tell you I shall go down. If anything happens—"

"That sweet little woman will be a widow," said Mr. Parkley.

"And who would care?" said Dutch, bitterly.

"My dear Mr. Parkley, we are anchored over the treasure, and sharks or no sharks, torn to pieces or left alone, I go down—Hester!"

He started and turned sharply round, just in time to catch the fainting woman as she was falling senseless on the deck.

CHAPTER XX.—PEPPER FOR THE SHARKS.

DUTCH felt a pang at his heart as he raised and carried the fainting woman below—Bessy Studwick joining him as he laid her on the little couch in the cabin; and he was about to leave her

in the latter's care, when she began to revive, and she called him by name.

For a moment he was about to run to her, but the old bitter suspicions hardened his heart, and he turned away.

"Oh," exclaimed Bessy Studwick, bitterly, "if he had been my husband, and behaved to me like that!"

"Pray, hush!" said Hester, feebly.

"I can't," exclaimed Bessy, clasping the weeping woman in her arms. "I know you must have felt horribly jealous of me once, dear, and I really did of you; but as for Dutch Pugh now, I absolutely hate him, and I'm sure you must ever so much more."

"I never loved him so dearly as I do now," sighed Hester. "Some day he will believe in me again."

She covered her face with her hands, and thought of her little adventure upon the deck, one which puzzled as well as alarmed her; and once or twice she was on the point of confiding in Bessy, but the thoughts of her husband's peril drove others away, and, making an effort, she rose to go on deck again.

"I'm sure you are not fit to go on deck," exclaimed Bessy, trying to restrain her.

"Yes," she said, gently. "I am better now, and I could not bear to stay here if he is in danger."

Feeling that it would only cause an extra strain on nerves already weakened, Bessy made no further opposition, but accompanied Hester on deck, where a bustle of preparation was going on, the captain and doctor both working in subordination to Dutch and Mr. Parkley. The air-pump was being fixed in a convenient spot, diving suits were in readiness for use, and tubes coiled in great snake-like rings. With an oily rag in his hand, and his cheeks blown out with importance, Rasp was fussing about and giving a touch here and a touch there; while no less important, and evidently feeling as if his task were done, Oakum sat on a coil of a rope, chewing his tobacco, and looking on.

But to Hester's great relief the diving apparatus was not yet going to be put in use; for Dutch, Mr. Parkley, and the doctor were busy at work with sundry jars, wires, and plates. In fact, they were placing a galvanic battery ready for action, and making some mysterious preparations that the sailors did not understand.

There was a small white canister, too, over which the doctor kept guard, ordering back any of the sailors that approached.

At last, when the battery was ready, and emitting a low, hissing noise from the zinc and platina plates immersed in a solution, a long coil of thin wire was unwound and attached to the little white canister.

"For Heaven's sake be careful, Dutch!" said Mr. Parkley, who had performed the latter operation. "Don't connect the wire till I give the word."

"Don't be alarmed," said Dutch, quietly, as he held the other end in his hand. "I shall be careful."

"But I am alarmed," said Mr. Parkley to himself. "He thinks life of no more value than the snuff of a candle, and I want to live as long as I can."

"Now, are you nearly ready?" said the captain, who came up, followed by Pollo grinning, and having on a tin three great pieces of beef.

"Yes, quite ready," said Dutch.

"Bring the meat here," exclaimed Mr. Parkley.

Choosing the largest piece, he half cut it in two, placed the white canister in the opening, and bound the meat round it firmly with a fresh piece of wire.

"Am dat mustard, sah?" said Pollo, with his eyes wide open.

"No, Pollo. It's pepper—pepper for the sharks," said Mr. Parkley, smiling.

"Ho!" said Pollo, thoughtfully. "I no see de good to gib de shark pepper, sah."

"Wait a minute, and you will, Pollo," said the captain, smiling.

"All ready now," said Mr. Parkley. "Every one stand back."

The crew shrank away, some of the men, though, climbing the rigging to get a good view of the proceedings, and John Studwick being helped into a safe position in the main chains. Then one of the pieces of coarse beef was taken and jerked out half a dozen yards from the ship.

As it struck the water and began to sink, there was a rush and commotion, as dark grey forms and white streaks seemed to rise from below. The water bubbled and foamed, and the lump of beef was seized, torn asunder, and two huge sharks gorged the pieces, and then could be seen swimming backwards and forwards, and round and round, in company with others.

"Cut the next up into small bits, 'Pollo," said the captain, who was standing on the bulwarks, holding on by the main shrouds.

"Yes, sah—I cut um small, and easy for mass' shark 'gestion," said Pollo, grinning.

He cut the beef into pieces of the size of his fist, with the large cook's knife he wore in a sheath at his belt.

As he passed them, up the captain threw them to the hungry sharks, each piece being snapped up by one or the other, as the monsters, not disdaining such morsels, turned half over, and gorged each fragment as it fell.

No less than seven could now be counted, all evidently made more savage and eager by the taste of meat, and ready to leap out of the water as they glided one over the other in a space not many yards square, where the water was still impregnated with the odour and juices of the beef.

"That will do for them now," cried Mr. Parkley, mounting beside the captain, with the lump of beef bound round the can in his fingers, holding it in one hand, whilst with the other he took a good grip of one of the rattlins.

"Are you ready, Pugh?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Is the wire all clear for a run?"

"Yes, perfectly. Stand back, man," cried Dutch, as the mulatto stood eagerly watching what was done.

"Then I shall throw it into the midst of them, and when I cry 'now,' make the connection—not before."

"I understand," said Dutch.

"One moment," said the captain. "Will it endanger the ship?"

"No," said Mr. Parkley, "because it will be too far away, and too deep. It will rock her, of course."

"All right," said Captain Studwick, nodding his head.

And giving the beef a swing to and fro, Mr. Parkley launched it through the air, so that it fell with a heavy splash some fifty feet from the schooner, and began to sink rapidly.

There was a tremendous swirl in the clear water directly, as the sharks dashed at it, going over one another like dogs in their eagerness to be first, for this was a piece of fourteen or fifteen pounds weight.

The next moment they were tearing at it, but baffled somewhat by the strong wire binding, while it sank rapidly, and the thin copper wire, that had fallen on the smooth surface like a line of light, ran rapidly over the side.

"Now!" cried Mr. Parkley, loudly.

As the word left his lips, Dutch applied the other end of the wire to the galvanic battery, an invisible spark darted along the thin copper to the case of dynamite; there was a dull rumble; the ship shivered as if struck by some heavy blow; a column of water rose in the air and sank back; and the schooner rolled from side to side, as a large wave lifted her, let her down, and then rushed onward over the rocks to the shore, running up the sands in a line of foam, and laving the trunks of the palms beyond the narrow strip.

The men clung to the bulwarks, looking startled, but seeing that the danger was over, they uttered a loud cheer; for as the water subsided the clear limpidity was gone—sand, blood, fragments of weed, and flesh, all combined to make it murky; and, what set the men off cheering again, there were the bodies of the seven sharks, four of them in ribbons, the other three apparently uninjured, but floating back downwards, quite dead, and with the foul fragments gliding slowly off with the hardly perceptible current.

"Well, I confess, Dutch, I should never have thought of that," exclaimed Mr. Parkley. "It was a good idea."

"So the men seem to think," said the captain, as a couple slipped down into the jolly boat, and, sculling it about, secured about a couple of dozen large fish that had also been killed by the dynamite. "But that was too near the schooner for safety; a shock or two like that would shake the masts out of her hull."

"It was more powerful than I expected," said Dutch. "We will fire the next from the boat, with a good length of wire, and the schooner must be fifty or a hundred yards away."

"But you will not fire another unless you are troubled with sharks?" queried the captain.

"I intend to fire a canister exactly beneath where we stand," said Dutch, "so as to sweep away the growth and sand and shingle that have been accumulating for the last two hundred years. One of those charges will do more in an instant than the men could do under water in a week."

He raised his eyes as he spoke, and found that the mulatto was listening intently to every word,

but with his eyes half closed, and a bitter look upon his face.

By this time the water was fast growing clear, and the change beneath the schooner was remarkable.

The canister of dynamite must have sunk nearly to the bottom before it was exploded, and so great was the lateral sweep of the concussion, that the seaweed seemed to have been levelled down in one direction, like a plantation after the passage of a hurricane; and grim and stark stood up now a series of dark stumps, the relics of the timbers of the ill-fated Spanish galleon, if such it really proved to be. Some of these were black, and nearly level with the sand; some were worn to a point by the attrition of the current; but there plainly enough now could be traced out in timbers the shape of the vessel; but not for long, since the weed began once more to float into its normal position. But enough was known now, and Oakum took a fresh plug of tobacco as he said to Rasp—

"There, old un, your work's cut out for some time to come."

No time was lost. A couple of dynamite canisters were lowered down in the most suitable spots where the sand and weed seemed to be thickest, and Mr. Parkley held one thin coil of wire and Dutch another, and at opposite sides of the schooner the kedge hawsers were buoyed and shipped; and, as the vessel slowly went with the current, the wire was payed out till the schooner had swung right round, and was riding by the anchor from her bows, and eighty or ninety yards away from the sunken wreck. The wire was sufficiently long to render the use of the boat unnecessary, and all being ready, the battery was once more brought into use, the wires being connected, and this time the water surged up as from some volcanic eruption, a great wave ran towards the schooner, which rode over it easily, and it passed on towards the shore, washing right up again amongst the trees.

The men went to work with a will, getting ropes to the buoys, hauling upon them, and gradually working the schooner back, and mooring her in her old position; but it was a good hour later before the water was once more clear, and they gazed down upon quite a different scene from that of the morning.

So effective had been the force of the explosion, that sand, weeds, small rocks and shingles, had been completely swept away, and lay at a distance, while the interior of the old wreck seemed to have been scooped right out.

The most careful search with the eye, though, failed to show any traces of that which they sought, and as evening was now fast drawing on, any further investigations were left till the following day.

CHAPTER XXI.—A DISCOVERY.

SO far as they had been able to make out, there was no trace of inhabitants near the place where the schooner was moored; but the adventure was of so important a nature that Captain Studwick felt it his duty to keep the most careful watch; and he was not sorry that afternoon to yield to the pressing request of Mr. Wilson and the doctor to go on

shore with their guns for a couple of hours' shooting.

"I consent," he said, "on condition that you are back here by nightfall, and that you take a couple of the men, well armed, with you."

This was agreed to, and the party of four was rowed ashore, Dutch and Mr. Parkley both declining to accompany them, on the score of fatigue; while, though John Studwick longed to be of the party, he felt that he was too weak, and watched them from the side, as the boat rowed through the sparkling water, landing the party on the golden sands.

As the boat was returning to the side, the longing to go on shore proved too strong for John Studwick, and he beckoned his sister to his side.

"Bessy," he said, "I must go and have an hour's walk under those shady trees, where the sand seems to be so smooth and soft."

Bessy started, partly at his saddened way of speaking, and partly that he, who seemed to hate the very idea of her being anywhere near Mr. Meldon, should propose to go ashore after him.

"You mean alone?" she said, quickly.

"Alone? No," he cried, petulantly. "I mean with you. Mrs. Pugh would like to go, too, perhaps."

"I will speak to father," she said, eager to please him in every way.

And she went forward to where Captain Studwick was chatting with Mr. Parkley and Dutch about the morrow's arrangements.

"John wishes to go ashore, father," she said, "to sit under the trees."

The captain stood thinking for a moment or two, and then, after a little hesitation—

"Well," he said, "I see no harm. The men shall row you ashore, and stop there. Don't go out of sight, nor far from the boat. I don't think there can be any danger; and, poor fellow, he will soon want to be back."

By the time Bessy returned to her brother, the keen desire was growing blunted, and he felt almost ready to resent what he looked upon as his sister's eagerness to go ashore, where the young doctor had gone.

"The boat is waiting, John, dear," she said, holding out her hand. "You will go too, Hester?"

Hester glanced towards Dutch, but he made no sign; and, yielding to Bessy's implied wish, she followed them to the boat, Oakum helping them down, and receiving his instructions from the captain as to keeping a sharp watch.

As the boat pushed off, the men just dipping their oars, and Oakum standing up and steering, for the distance was only about fifty yards, the captain turned quietly to the mate.

"Lower down the other boat quietly," he said, "and have the rest of the men ready to jump in, and row ashore at a moment's notice. Parkley, Mr. Pugh, I think it is better to be too particular than not particular enough, so we will get our revolvers and a rifle or two ready. Where's Mr. Pugh?"

"He went to the cabin directly," said Mr. Parkley.

And on their following him they found him loading his rifle, and saw the butt of his revolver sticking out of his breast.

"Actuated by the same thought," said the captain. "Well, yes," said Dutch. "There may be no danger, either from beast or Indian, but it is as well to be on the safe side."

Taking rifles on deck, they went and leaned over the bulwarks, talking, to see the little party land, and Oakum help out the ladies, who walked slowly up with John Studwick towards the trees, while the sailors sat about close to the boat, or threw themselves down upon the sands.

"We seem to have been suspicious enough over this affair," said the captain, taking off his cap, so as to let the soft breeze that was now beginning to blow after the heat of the day fan his brown forehead. "I wonder what has become of the Cuban."

"Home by this time, I should say," replied Mr. Parkley.

While Dutch, with an uneasy feeling creeping over him, leaned there, rifle in hand, watching the shore.

"I had my suspicions at first," continued the captain, "and really hardly expected to get out here without some hindrance."

"What did you suspect?" said Mr. Parkley, lighting a cigar, and handing one to the captain, who lit up in turn.

"Anything—nothing. I had got it into my head that this fellow wanted to stop us, and I was prepared to be overhauled by a swift steamer; for a mutiny on board; to find him here first—there, it is always the way: once give your imagination its head, and away it goes."

"Well, nothing could have gone better than the trip has since we started, and if it should prove that there is treasure below us here, all we have to do is to dive and get it all."

"If the sharks will let you," said the captain.

"Well, at first I thought we were completely checkmated; but you saw what Pugh did to-day," he continued, in a low tone. "It's my belief that if obstacles ten times as difficult offer themselves, he would surmount them."

They both glanced at Dutch, and then followed his eyes, to see that the ladies were gathering flowers, the men fruit and shell-fish, and that all on shore looked so peaceful and lovely that the longing came upon them to join the little party.

"It is so easy to imagine danger," said the captain; and then, lulled by the peaceful aspect of matters into security, they went on talking in a low tone about the various incidents of the day, while Dutch kept stern watch alone.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 212.)

AN animal which it is puzzling naturalists to classify was captured a short time ago in Oswego county, New York. It is a strange little creature, resembling a bat in some respects, but in others totally dissimilar. This unique specimen of animal creation had a head like a monkey's, with wings both seven inches in length, with claws on the end of each, with which it clung to the cage in which we saw it. The creature was also furnished with a tail, at the end of which was another claw. Its eyes were open and plainly seen, and it appeared lively, making many strenuous but ineffectual efforts to escape from the cage.

About the Hedges.

WHITE columns of smoke rise up slowly into the tranquil atmosphere, till they overtop the tallest elms, and the odour of the burning couch is carried across the meadows from the lately-ploughed stubble, where the weeds have been collected in heaps and fired. The heaps are large this year, and there are more of them than usual, for the wet weather and the consequent difficulty of cleaning the land caused a profuse growth of weeds. So much was this the case, that in some fields when the corn was cut the green surface of weeds underneath resembled at a little distance a rough pasture ground. The stubble itself, short and in regular lines, affords less and less cover every year. As the seed is now almost always drilled in, and the plants grow in mathematically straight lines (for the convenience of horse-hoeing), of course when the crop is reaped, if you stand at one side of the field, you can see right across between the short stubbs, so that a mouse could hardly find shelter. Then quickly come the noisy steam-ploughing engines, after them the couch collectors, and finally the heaps are burnt, and the strong scent of smoke hangs over the ground.

Against these interruptions of their haunts and quiet ways what are the partridges to do? Even at night the place is scarcely their own, for every now and then, as the breeze comes along, the smouldering fires are fanned into bright flame, enough to alarm the boldest bird. The thing, of course, has to be done, but it is now done so soon after the reaping that the pleasure of partridge shooting over highly-farmed land has been reduced to a minimum. And when the wind blows hard the difficulty is naturally increased: the birds, with so little cover, get up before you are hardly within shot, and, carried on the gale, are quickly beyond even the choke-bore.

But all the land is not highly farmed, and, strolling on beside the hedge, we pass another broad arable field, where the teams have been dragging the plough, indeed, but have only just opened a few furrows and gone home. Here a flock of sheep are calmly feeding, or rather picking up a little, having been turned in that nothing might be lost. There is a sense of quietness, of repose; the trees of the coppice close by are still, and the dying leaf as it drops falls straight to the ground. A faint haze clings to the distant woods at the foot of the hills. It is afternoon, the best part of an autumn day, and sufficiently warm to make the stile a pleasant resting-place. A dark cloud, whose edges rise curve upon curve, hangs in the sky, fringed with bright white light, for the sun is behind it; and long, narrow streamers of light radiate from the upper part like the pointed rays of an antique crown. Across an interval of blue to the eastward a second massive cloud, white and shining as if beaten out of solid silver, fronts the sun, and reflects the beams passing horizontally through the upper ether downwards on the earth like a mirror.

The sparrows in the stubble rise in a flock, and settle down again. Yonder a solitary lark is singing. Then the sun emerges, and the yellow autumn beams flood the pale stubble and the dark red earth of the

furrow. On the bushes in the hedge hang the vines of the bryony, bearing thick masses of red berries. The winters of late have been remarkable for the quantities of hedge berries, and, being so open and mild, the birds have found plenty of food, and have not required to resort to them, as they do in hard weather. Last spring, the holly berries, for instance, remained on the bushes almost till the middle of the summer. The hawthorn leaves in places have turned pale, and are touched, too, towards the stalk with a deep brown hue. The contrast of the two tints causes an accidental colour resembling that of bronze, which catches the eye at the first glance, but disappears on looking closer. Spots of yellow on the elms glow the more brilliantly from the background of dull green. The drooping foliage of the birch exhibits a paler yellow; the nut-tree bushes shed brown leaves upon the ground. Perhaps the beech leaves are the most beautiful; two or three tints are blended on the topmost boughs. There is a ruddy orange hue, a tawny brown, and a bright green: the sunlight comes and mingles these together. The same leaf will sometimes show two, at least, of these colours—green shading into brown, or into a ruddy gold. Later on, the oaks, in a monochrome of buff, will rival the beeches; in spring, too, before the leaf is quite out, the oaks have a tint of reddish brown.

Acorns are plentiful this year, and very large, hanging in clusters. Every few minutes one drops from the tree overhead, with a smart tap on the hard earth, and rebounds some inches high. Some of these that fall are already dark—almost black—but if opened they will be found bored by a grub. They are not yet ripe as a crop; the rooks are a good guide in that respect, and they have not yet set steadily to work upon this their favourite autumn food. Others that have fallen and been knocked out of the cup are a light yellow at the base and green towards the middle and the point; the yellow part is that which has been covered by the cup. In the sward there is a small hole, from out of which creeps a wasp at intervals; it is a nest, and some few of them are still at work. But their motions are slow and lack vivacity; before long numbers must die, and already many have succumbed after crawling miserably on the ground which they spurned a short while since, when, with a brisk buzz, they flew from apple to plum.

In the quiet woodland lane, a covey of partridges are running to and fro on the short sward at the side, and near them two or three pheasants are searching for food. Though differing in size and other ways, pheasant and partridge may often be seen together. The geometrical spiders—some of them look almost as big as a nut—hang their webs, spun to a regular pattern, on the bushes. The fungi flourish; there is a huge specimen on the elm there, but the flowers are nearly gone. Even the corn marigold, which in places has for a long time lined the highway with its yellow bloom, is fading.

A few steps down the lane, upon looking over a gate into a large arable field, where the harrow has broken up the clods, a faint bluish tinge may be noticed on the dull earth in the more distant parts. A second glance shows that it is caused by a great

flock of wood-pigeons. Some more come down out of the elms, and join their companions; there must be a hundred and fifty or two hundred of them. The wood-pigeon on the ground at a distance is difficult to distinguish, or rather to define individually—the pale blue tint seems to confuse the eye with a kind of haze. Though the flock take little notice now—knowing themselves to be far out of gunshot—yet they would be quickly on the alert if an attempt were made to approach them.

Already some of the elms are becoming bare—there are gaps in the foliage where the winds have carried away the leaves. The ivy, whose rootlets cling so firmly to the tree-trunk, is beginning to blossom. In contradiction to the general rule with plants, it puts forth its sombre bloom as the frosts are near at hand. In the middle of the day, while the sun shines, some bees seek it, and stay as long as they can—the year has scarce anything more to give them. Flies, too, come to it. The ivy is the last friend of the bees in the fall, and the last friend, too, of the birds before the warm spring softens the hard ground. The ivy berries ripen as the winter goes, and the birds then resort to the trees up which it climbs.

On the bramble bushes the blackberries cluster thickly, unseen and ungathered in this wild spot. The happy hearts that go a-blackberrying think little of the past; yet there is a deep, a mournful significance attached to that joyous time. For how many centuries have the blackberries tempted men, women, and children out into the fields, laughing at scratched hands and nettles, and clinging burrs, all merrily endured for the sake of so simple a treasure-trove. Under the relics of the ancient pile dwellings of Switzerland, disinterred from the peat and other deposits, have been found quantities of blackberry seeds, together with traces of crabs and sloes; so that by the dwellers in those primeval villages in the midst of the lakes the wild fruits of autumn were sought for much as we seek them now: the old instincts are strong in us still.

The fieldfares will soon be here now, and the redwings, coming, as they have done for generations, about the time of the sowing of the corn. Without an almanac they know the dates; so the old sportsmen used to declare that their pointers and setters were perfectly aware when September was approaching, and showed it by unusual restlessness. By the brook, the meadows are green and the grass long still. It has not been so burnt up this year as it sometimes is. The flags, too, are green, though numbers of dead leaves swim down on the current. There is green, again, where the root crops are flourishing; but the brown tints are striving hard, and must soon gain the mastery of colour. From the barn comes the clatter of the winnowing machine, and the floor is covered with heaps of grain.

After the sun has gone down, and the shadows are deepening, it is lighter in the open stubbles than in the enclosed meadows—the short white straw seems to reflect what little light there is. The partridges call to each other, and, after each call, run a few yards swiftly, till they assemble at the well-known spot where they have roosted all the summer. Then

comes a hare, stealing by without a sound. Suddenly he perceives that he is watched, and goes off at a rapid pace, lost in the brooding shadow across the field. Yonder a row of conical-roofed wheat ricks stand out boldly against the sky, and above them a lucent planet shines. Down in the meads beside the brook a white mist draws slowly over the grass; but the twilight lingers, and it is long before it is night.

The Electric Light.

AN exhibition of peculiar interest in its relation to the "coming light" of Mr. Edison has taken place. The electric current was generated by a Farmer-Wallace dynamo-electric machine, the first which has been shown in this country. The machine is named after its inventors, Professor Moses G. Farmer, of the Torpedo Department of the United States Government, and Mr. William Wallace, the electrical machine manufacturer, of Ansonia, Connecticut. It was asserted that no previous machine had accomplished that which was shown, six lights being sustained on one circuit. In the case of the Jablochhoff candle, there are said to be only four lights in one circuit, but by means of a machine having three or four rings, a corresponding number of circuits can be maintained, each with its four lights. By the Lontin system, eight wires sustain seven lamps. But here there was simply a pair of wires, one wire going from the machine and the other returning to it. By the Wallace machine, as many as ten lights have been sustained in one circuit; and with an enlarged machine, giving a more powerful current, the number could doubtless be further increased.

The light itself is emitted from a somewhat rough-looking apparatus, which has the merit of possessing no clock-work, although effectually regulating the distance between the carbons as they are consumed. The carbons differ from those of the Jablochhoff candle in the manner of their position, being horizontal instead of vertical. There is no intervening kaelin, the current passing freely from one carbon to the other.

The arrangement in itself is altogether peculiar, the carbons being two flat bars or plates, each nearly a foot long by two inches or more in depth, and half an inch thick. These two bars come together *à la guillotine*, or very nearly touch each other, and the light plays between the two edges, choosing that spot where the resistance is least. This spot of least resistance varies with the consumption of the carbon, the light travelling slowly from end to end. Should the distance between the bars become too great, so that the circuit is broken, an electro-magnet, which has previously held the upper bar in a sort of clutch, becomes demagnetized by the cessation of the current, and the upper carbon drops. The carbons being thus brought in contact, the current is restored, and the electro-magnet resumes its action, whereby the upper carbon is lifted, and the light is maintained between the two plates.

The plan has the further merit that when it is desired to start the lights after the machine has been at rest, there is no need of any manipulation

in regard to the lamp. The machine simply has to be set going, whereby the carbons are ignited, and the electro-magnet does its duty in separating the carbons. These carbon plates are equal to the sustentation of the electric light for one hundred hours, whereas the Jablochhoff candles have to be renewed every hour and a half, though by a switch arrangement four candles are made to act in succession, thus extending the action of the lamp over a period of six hours.

The Farmer-Wallace machine has no permanent magnet. It is a complete piece of apparatus, and is kept cool by a simple and ingenious arrangement, whereby a rapid current of air is drawn through its working parts. Lightness, strength, and simplicity are claimed for the machine; and it is also said to be cheaper than any other of equal power, although at present the exact price does not seem to be determined. It is duplex in its construction, so that if necessary it can be used as two distinct machines. Its full power is equal to ten lights, though on this occasion the number was limited to six. A six-horse power steam-engine was used to drive the machine, whereas for its full capacity a ten-horse engine was requisite. Including the cost of the coal for the engine, the carbons for the lamps, and the wages of one man, it was reckoned that each light cost two-pence per hour.

The photometric power of the light was a matter of uncertainty. It was suggested that each lamp was equal to 800 candles, but this might be an outside estimate. The light was strong, but variable; the latter defect being the more apparent as there were no globes to the lamps. The carbons were evidently of a rough, inferior description, exceedingly likely to cause a degree of flashing in the light, which was certainly observable. But the character of the lamps had nothing to do with the virtues of the machine which sent forth the current. The machine itself appeared to work very smoothly and effectively. As a matter of fact, it was stated to have been tested up to nine lights on one circuit, the steam engine working in the proportion of one indicated horsepower per lamp.

It will be observed, on referring to the *New York Sun*, that Mr. Edison is described as saying:—"With fifteen to twenty of these dynamo-electric machines recently perfected by Mr. Wallace, I can light the entire lower part of New York City, using a 500-horse power engine." The precise method which Mr. Edison intends to adopt is of course at present unknown. Mr. Edison also signifies his intention to make use of the machine termed a "telemachon."

The part which the telemachon is specially adapted to fulfil is that of developing the power which is transmitted from a distance. Supposing a waterfall to exist in the neighbourhood of a city, the falling water can be employed to rotate a turbine. The turbine will give motion to a dynamo-electric machine, such as the Farmer-Wallace. A powerful electric current will thus be set up, as in this exhibition, when the machine was worked by means of a steam engine. The current thus excited could be transmitted by a wire or a cable to the city, and there be taken up by a telemachon,

which is really an electric engine, capable of doing duty like a steam engine.

Mr. Edison proposes to employ the telemachon in a way which is not yet perfectly clear; but the properties which it places at his disposal are pretty evident. A little telemachon may be placed in each house. A wire conveying the current being "laid on," the occupant of the house can at any time connect the wire with his telemachon, which thereupon will become an engine possessing motive power. By means of belting or shafting, the telemachon can be connected with a sewing machine or any other contrivance, and manual power will be superseded. In the absence of precise details, obscurity still attaches to the plans of Mr. Edison; but for that reason every ray of information is the more acceptable, particularly as some time is likely to elapse before the exact truth is known. The telemachon is the invention of Mr. Wallace alone; and two of these remarkable machines are understood to have been just shipped for England.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XLV.—BY DAY.

THE public might have been present in force, but they were not; for inquests upon bodies found in Thames' stream are common events, such as find their way into corners of the morning papers in the shape of short paragraphs. And in this instance there was a very seedy-looking staff to represent the Press—namely, a man who winked solemnly at old Matt as he passed him on his way to a side-table beside the jury. The necessary witnesses were there, apparently, and the inquest dragged on its slow length as they told all they knew. But Matthew Space must be quoted as an exception; he did not tell all, only that he knew the poor woman by sight, while he rightly said that he was ignorant of her name and home. It would be time, he thought, to tell all when there was no more danger of publicity; and so he allowed himself to be huffed by the coroner for taking up his valuable time.

But now came forward a pale, well-dressed, weeping girl, who stated that her name was Eleanor.

"Eleanor what?" said the coroner, frowning very severely, and oozing all over his very high, bald forehead with the quintessence of morality; for the poor girl shivered before him, and looked appealingly from face to face of the jurymen. "Eleanor what?" said the coroner again, with quite a snap.

"Anderson," said the girl, sobbing.

And then for a few minutes she could not proceed to tell her tale: how that for a year past she had always tried to see those girls who were taken out of the river. She hardly knew why, only that she had known some of them, as she knew poor Marian; and there seemed something which drew her towards the river. She met the policemen, and they let her go with them; for she was looking for Marian, and somehow she was not surprised to find her there.

Had known her a long time—years, she thought—and they lodged together. She had often said that she was tired of life, but never talked about her friends, or anything of the past: thought she came

from the country. Had not seen her before for days, and had been uneasy, and fancied she had gone over the bridge, as many did—could not tell why, unless because she was tired of her life, and had the feeling of being drawn to do it. Her name was Marian—that was what she was called—but thought it was not her real name; did not know why, but many girls like her gave themselves fresh names. She gave witness a little Bible once, with passages marked in it, but there was no name in it. Never spoke of any one else, or of herself, but was always very kind, and had nursed witness once through a bad fever, not long back, and never left her night or day, when no one else dared come near; and now she was gone.

There was a pause here, longer than those made while the coroner had taken down the depositions, during which he had frowned very severely, and now appeared greatly annoyed at the unbusiness-like sobbing of the poor girl, who sat down again upon a form behind old Matt, who tried to whisper a few words of comfort, as the jurymen mostly seemed very intent upon the paper before them.

Then followed the doctor, to tell of his horrible task, and express his opinion respecting the marks or blows upon the face of deceased, such, though, as might have been caused by striking against some part of the bridge in falling. He was of opinion that she must have struck twice, as there was a fracture upon the back of the skull; and she had evidently been dead some days.

"Found dead."

And then there was a little quiet bustle, and scraping of chairs upon the oilcloth, for the inquest was over; and old Matt and the weeping girl were standing outside by some railings.

"Strange as we should meet again, after talking as we did."

"Yes, yes," said the girl, sadly; "but why didn't you say you knew her when I spoke to you?"

"Didn't know her by that name," said Matt; "and I had only seen her a few times, hardly to speak to. But about that Bible?"

"Well!" said the girl, sadly.

"Have you got it now?"

"Yes," she said.

And then she turned, for a hand was laid upon her arm, and one of the jurymen led her on a few steps, talking long and earnestly, till, after repeating something aloud two or three times, he walked away; and Matt and the girl—two of the waifs of London streets—went slowly on, not noticing that they were watched.

"Poor, poor Marian!" sobbed the girl, stopping by a doorway. "Told me to read the words she had marked in the Bible, and then to go and do that!"

"Well, well, well," said the old man; "let's hope she has gone to a better world. And now, my lass, where are you going?"

"Back to my lodging," said the girl, wearily.

"That gentleman told you to call somewhere, didn't he?" said Matt.

"Ah, yes," said the girl, abstractedly. "I think so."

"Now, I don't believe you remember it," said

Matt; "but I happened to hear it, and I'll write it down. Now, look here," and he brought out his old, ragged memorandum-book and the lead pencil stump; and then, using the crown of his hat for a desk, he wrote down the address carefully, tore out half a leaf, and gave it to the girl.

"There, my lass," he said, "take my advice, and go there; and now I want you to let me have that Bible."

"What for?" and the girl looked wonderingly at him.

"It's a whim of mine, that's all," said Matt. "But you'll—"

He paused, for a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and, turning round, he stood face to face with the juryman who had spoken to the girl.

"What paper was that you gave to the girl?" he said, roughly.

"The one you ought to have given," said Matt, resenting the question and the tone of voice in which it was asked.

"What do you mean?" said the stranger.

Old Matt was weak and ill, or he would have retorted angrily; but he only said, "An address."

"What address?" said the juryman, dubiously.

"Well, then, yours, if you must know," said Matt.

The juryman looked keenly at the old printer, who met his gaze without flinching.

"It was easy to remember," said the former.

"I know that," said Matt; "but I thought she'd forget; and you seemed to mean well by the poor lass. I watched you, sir, at the inquest."

"God knows I do, my man," said the juryman, softly; "and I ask your pardon for playing the spy; for I must confess to having had my doubts of you."

"It's all right, sir; and we can cry quits," said Matt. "I had my doubts too, and was in two minds about writing down the address; but if you can do anything towards saving the country the cost of another inquest, for God's sake do. No, thank you, sir—I don't want your money. I don't like taking it where I haven't earned it. It's a weak point of mine, and has stood in the way of my comfort more than once; and I'm old now, sir, and can't break myself of bad habits. Good day, sir."

The juryman smiled as they parted, and old Matt hurried off, talking to himself; for the girl had disappeared while he had been detained.

"I want to see that Bible," he muttered, "and he's hindered me dreadfully. But, yes—no—yes—that's her—there she is," and he shuffled on after a slight figure he saw crossing the road, some distance down the street. "Hang the folks, how they do get in your way when you're in a hurry!" he growled. "Now, stoopid, which way is it to be?"

And then he hurried and panted along to overtake the retreating figure, which had again disappeared. Dodging amongst the vehicles he encountered, he crossed the road, pressing on, with every one he met apparently resenting his hurry, till passing a turning, he looked down, to see the figure he had followed nearly at the bottom.

"Gets over the ground well," muttered the old man, wiping his forehead; "but I'm safe of her now.

Must have that Bible; there may be some clue there, and I want to have this matter cleared up. But how can I tell Miss Lucy?"

The old man reached the bottom of the street, and stood within twenty yards of the figure he sought to overtake, when, hurrying on, he caught up to her, saying—

"My lass, you'll let me have that book, won't you?"

The figure turned sharply round, as Matt touched her shoulder lightly; but the face was strange, and, taken aback and confounded, the old man made a rough apology, and stood panting as he clung to the railings of a house hard by.

CHAPTER XLVI.—MR. JARKER IS WANTED.

MR. WILLIAM JARKER had had a long holiday from the public school where her Majesty's officers try to instil lessons of good, while their refractory pupils resent them to the best of their ability. So long had been Mr. Jarker's holiday that the police had grown uncomfortable at their inability to bring something home to him. But he was wanted at last, on account of a collection of plate and valuables that had suddenly disappeared, after a few linnets and finches had been netted, some thirty miles down in Hertfordshire; though even here the burglary would not have drawn Mr. Jarker into trouble, had it not been for a confederate who had "peached," in consequence of what he called an unfair division of the spoil.

So Mr. Jarker was wanted just at a time when he felt very comfortable and secure. He had certainly felt rather uneasy for a few days past, and read, or rather stumbled through, the various newspapers, taking particular interest in passages relating to discoveries of bodies and inquests; but now this uneasiness had worn off, and, no further notice having been taken of his behaviour by the Hardon family, he felt in very good spirits; though for all that he had kept away from Bennett's-rents, so that he might not encounter the Rev. Arthur Sterne, who had been assaulted, he heard, and, on the principle of giving a dog a bad name and then hanging him, Bill thought he might be accused of the assault. As to the child, he learned that the curate had taken it to his own home.

Mr. Jarker's notice was drawn to the fact of his being wanted one day when making his way from the Dials into Holborn. Naturally given to casting his eyes about him, he became aware of a quiet-looking man following him at a distance; and no sooner did Mr. Jarker catch sight of that face than horrors of the past untold danced before his eyes for an instant. But the next moment he thrust his hands into his pockets, drew a long breath, and began to whistle, all the while looking out ahead for what he next expected to see—a policeman in uniform.

It might be supposed that the whistler intended to give the person who followed him so closely into custody; but this was not the case, for Mr. Jarker imagined that no sooner was there a policeman in sight than the quiet-looking man would begin to close up.

But it might be somebody else who was wanted, so Mr. Jarker crossed the road—so did the quiet

man; Bill crossed again—so did the quiet man; and, though the weather was cold, the bird-catcher perspired, as he muttered—

"I wonder what it's for?"

However, he appeared to take matters very coolly, and peeped here and there into the bird-fanciers' shops, and so made his way into Holborn, now and then directing a peep at his quiet friend, who was apparently not taking the slightest heed of his proceedings, but, all the same, thoroughly realizing the difficulty of finding one of his brotherhood when wanted.

Passengers were plentiful here, and the crowd thickened as Jarker went on, till a good opportunity seemed to present itself.

"Now for it!" thought Bill; and, after a glance over his shoulder, he dodged in and out and about for five minutes, making more than one feint of having turned out of the main street; then, being apparently very much taken with the contents of a draper's window, he stopped short, and glanced to the right, to find the quiet-looking man in precisely the same place, and worse still, probably in obedience to a sign from the said quiet man, to the left there was a policeman closing up quickly.

"Meant for me!" muttered Bill; and again, as he turned hotter, "I wonder what it's for?" while once more glancing to the right, there was the quiet man also closing in quickly.

But not so quickly as Jarker made a leap backwards into the road, dodged right under a horse's legs, round an omnibus, past cabs, carts, and waggons, and in and out and about like an eel, invulnerable to the tread of horses' feet or the passage of wheels. Ordinary people would have been run over half a dozen times, but Bill Jarker was not, and on he tore, with the two constables in full chase.

Jarker had not much start, but he made the most of it, with the full determination of making his escape if possible. Perhaps even for a small robbery he might have run hard, and fought hard, to avoid capture; but at the present time there was a look of desperation in his face that prevented more than one willing hand from attempting his seizure; and away he sped, in and out of the vehicles coming and going upon the slippery road. All at once he caught sight of a new peril. Right in front there was another policeman, and if, to avoid him, he took to the pavement, so great was the crowd of passengers that he must have been hemmed-in and captured directly. So on dashed Jarker, right at the constable in front, coming down upon him with the impetus of a battering-ram. Over he went, and on dashed Bill, with the other constables in close pursuit, and shouts and cries rising on all sides. "Stop thief! stop thief!" with the tail of followers increasing each moment.

Jarker's breath came hot and thick, and he felt that a few more minutes passed and he would be marching through the street handcuffed and with his liberty stopped. He thought no more of that, but shuddered, while, at the same moment, hope animated his breast, for he could see, far in front, a haven of safety: right before him the street was up, and the boards and bricks told of repairs to the

sewers, while the large heap of earth pointed out the depth down at which they lay.

On tore Jarker, racing over the ground with a long, loping run, and on came the police, with the tag of idlers; but the goal was reached. With one bound Jarker cleared the barrier, ran and stumbled over the loose earth for some distance, and then dropped to the first platform, slid down ladder after ladder, passed man after man, too astonished and startled to attempt to seize him, sometimes falling, sometimes climbing, with the deal planks springing, and brick-bats and clods of earth falling after him. One man made a blow at him with his spade, but it came too late, for Jarker reached the bottom, leaped into the black stream, here but little over his knees, went splashing away under the echoing dark arch of the sewer, into the dense black passages that run for so many miles under London, and was out of sight long before the first policeman was halfway down the great opening.

The main sewers were not made in those days, and the quiet man stopped for an instant to give some instructions to one of the constables, the result being that he leaped into a hansom cab, and very soon after, as the tide was up, a Thames police row-galley was being pulled slowly backwards and forwards in front of the mouths of two large openings which lent their black, effluent streams to the great river.

On through the darkness went Jarker, always with the stream, his hands outstretched in front, and his head turned from time to time to catch a glimpse of the flash of some bull's-eye lantern. On he pressed, but not unpursued; since for some distance a couple of policemen—the one in plain clothes, and he who had been knocked down and made vicious by the blow—came splashing along.

Once the ruffian stopped, drew out a heavy life-preserver, and, with an oath, turned back; but directly after he was pressing on again, carefully feeling his way by the slimy wall, for the water grew deeper and deeper, and more than once his quick ear detected the light scuffling noise as of some little animal running, and a splash as of something leaping into the murky stream.

At last Jarker stopped, for the long-continued silence and the thick darkness taught him that he was unpursued; but he knew well enough that though the pursuit had perhaps ceased, the entrances to the sewers would be carefully watched; and he felt too now that there would be no home for him again in Bennett's-rents.

"They're gallus clever!" growled the ruffian, when, after pressing on a little farther, he once more stopped short—"they're gallus clever, them p'lice; but they don't know everythink."

And now, after listening long and carefully, he turned off short round to the right, and waded onward for a few minutes, when he stopped again, to draw forth a box and light a match; but he found that they were wetted, and nothing followed but faint streaks of phosphorescent light; when, with a curse, he threw the useless splints away and pressed on.

Dark, plashing, echoing paths, with noisome mephitic smells and the sound of hurrying waters—

paths that might in ignorance be traversed for days and days, until the weary wanderer sank down, for the black stream to bear him out to the great river. Here there would be a smaller sewer off to the right, here one to the left; while drain-pipe and culvert emptied their filthy streams, augmenting always the larger sewer where the ruffian waded, as the current swelled, and rose and rolled swiftly on, at times with almost sufficient force to render his footing insecure.

At one time the water was up to his breast; but it soon shallowed when he entered a branch and faced the stream, guiding himself ever with his hand upon the slimy wall, as if thoroughly acquainted with his road, and proceeding the while at no mean rate along the gloomy way; for Jarker had been here before, and he pressed on fearless of darkness or rats, thinking that the only danger that could assail him would be a rush of water after a heavy rain. At times, though, he stopped, splashing and beating the stream, and imitated the snapping, snarling bark of a dog, for something would run scratching over him—then another, and another—keen, hunger-bitten little animals; then there followed splash after splash, as they leaped into the water. Now he was clear of them again, and stopped puzzled, feeling along the wall on both sides for something he could not find—some guide-mark or open sewer-mouth; but now again came the little eager animals, hunger-driven and fierce, crowding and swimming round him, swarming up his back and breast, and biting sharply with their little keen teeth as the wretch leaped and bounded about, tearing half a dozen off to make room for a score.

"If I only had one of their gallus lights!" shrieked the ruffian, forgetful of the risk of being heard, and of the ruse he had before successfully practised, and in the horror of his position ready even to have given himself up, as he cursed and yelled in a frightful manner—the hideous noises echoing along the vaulted sewer, and sounding doubly frightful.

"Curse 'em! I shall be gnawed to death!" shrieked Jarker, as he could not help recalling the times when he had gloated with delight over the performances of some steel-teethed terrier in a pit amidst a dozen rats.

And now, as he fought there, splashing about in the water, and tearing off rat after rat to crush them in his powerful hands, he could not but feel how the tables were turned, and groaned piteously as a great dread came upon him—a horror blacker than the black darkness around. But Jarker fought on savagely for his life, while the diminutive size of his adversaries formed their protection again and again. He had his life-preserver out now, and struck with it at random, fierce and heavy blows, each of which would have beaten the life out of a dozen rats, but only once or twice had they any effect; and then he struck the brick side of the sewer, when the lead knob was loosened and fell from the whalebone handle into the rushing water, and with a curse Jarker dashed the useless fragment away.

Faint and harassed, his great brute strength of no avail, his hands and face streaming with blood,

Jarker now made a fierce rush up stream; but his progress was slow with the water so deep; when, as if fearing to lose their prey, the rats redoubled their efforts, and leaped upon him furiously, till, half-mad with the horror of their fearful assault—one he had never known before in his many sewer wanderings, through having been provided with a light—Jarker drew in a long breath, exhaled it again, thoroughly inflated his lungs as he beat off his assailants, and then plunged beneath the water for nearly a minute, when he raised his head for breath, and plunged under again and again.

His plan succeeded; for, evidently at a loss, the tribe of rats had gone down with the stream; and then he was alone and afraid to stir, lest he should bring them back, as he stood panting and dripping with the noisome water, and leaned against the slippery wall.

"I did say as I'd keep a dawg," growled Jarker, at last; "and if I'd ha' had one—"

And then he burst out into a hideous string of oaths and curses at what he called his ill luck, as, after listening for some time, he resumed his way in the echoing subterranean labyrinth, trembling lest the rats should have heard his voice.

But he did not go far before he stopped as if puzzled, and stood thinking, and listening to the rush of the stream, and the trickling of drain after drain, as it emptied itself into the main current, itself but a tributary of a greater. He dared not retrace his steps on account of the rats, but went slowly on; stopped, went on again; stopped once more, to scratch his dripping head; and then he gave a leap and a cry of terror, as he felt an enemy swim up once more and try to effect a lodgment. Then he hurried forward through the dense black darkness, then back a little way, in a strange, excited way, tearing and splashing about furiously as a new horror assailed him; and at last, muttering low blasphemies, muttering them in a low whisper, lest they should be heard by the rats, he made another push on for many yards, cursing the police, the rats, and his ill luck. Once he stumbled and fell with a heavy splash, to be swept along over and over by the stream before he recovered his footing, to stand half-drowned and clinging to the bricks, giving vent now to a whimpering, sobbing howl, that seemed as if it had come from a dog; for, with his courage gone and his head in a whirl, he stood now in the intense darkness afraid to move, as his imagination peopled the sewers around him with horrors at the very thought of which he shuddered; for, in spite of scores of rambles in these subterranean channels, with whose many turns he had considered himself perfectly familiar, Bill Jarker had lost his way.

The police turned back after pursuing Jarker for a short distance along the sewer; but though not disposed to follow him along the dark subway, they had not given him up, for the outlets were carefully watched, both by the places where repairs were going on and also at the mouths in the Thames' bank; while, after proper arrangements had been made, the sewers were searched that night with lanterns; the principal man engaged more than once announc-

ing, in a very loud voice, which went echoing along the arched ways, that he (Jarker) might just as well give up as be starved out. But, for all that, Mr. Jarker was not found.

"Not much use hunting along here," muttered one man to another; "here's a hundred places where he could hide till we got by."

"Remember that poor chap we found just here, Joe?" said one man, evidently quite at home in the place—a rough fellow in a Guernsey shirt and high boots, and wearing a hair-mask.

"Ah," said another, "well."

"What was that?" said the quiet man, who was also here.

"Chap we found all along here," said the other, "and brought him out in a basket."

"Basket?" said the quiet man.

"Ah!" said the other; "bones lying all along here; trod on 'em as you went—picked clean."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the quiet man, who had not shuddered before for at least ten years.

"Right enough," said the other, sulkily—"rats!"

"Here, let's get out," said the quiet man, "we are doing no good," and he made the light of his bull's-eye lantern play along the surface of the water to where he could just see a little head above the stream, as its owner swam rapidly away, leaving an ever-widening track behind. "Let's get out; it's no use to go splashing along here; if he isn't drowned, all we can do is to wait for him."

"He aint drowned," said a policeman, thrusting his lantern up a drain, and peering in—"he's too much of a rat hisself; and I wouldn't mind laying that he's worked his way up to light before now."

And the man stopped, gazing up the black, noiseless channel before him, as if it possessed some attraction.

"Gone up there, safe," said the quiet man, laughing. "Go up, Tom, and see—I'll wait for you."

"Officers allus goes fust to lead the way, and privates follers," said the policeman. "Nice place, though, aint it?"

"Whereabouts are we now?" said the quiet man.

"Don't zackly know," said the man in the hair mask. "Not far from Holborn, I should say."

"Going up there, Tom?" said the quiet man, unscrewing the top of a small dram-flask.

"Arter you, sir," said the policeman.

The quiet man took the "arter you" to apply to the dram-flask, which he passed to his follower; and as no one seemed disposed to crawl on hands and knees along the narrow place, the party slowly retraced their steps to where they had descended, and it was with a feeling of relief that they found themselves once more in the clear night air.

A WIDOWER, who had taken another partner, was serenaded on his wedding night. The parties brought a phonograph, in which were preserved some of the oburgations of his first wife, and when they set it going under his window, the happy bridegroom broke out in a cold sweat, and crawled up the chimney on a bridal tour. — *Sporting Times*.

In Afghanistan.

IN the days of which I write—now nearly forty years ago—the dress, arms, and equipment of the British infantry soldier were very different from what they are at present. To begin with, instead of the close-fitting helmet, he wore a cumbersome shako, which, although in India it was covered with white, was no protection against either the rain or the sun. The old abomination known as the high stock, of stiff leather, was rarely unbuckled, even on the line of march. His coat was of a coarse, brick-dust coloured cloth, with tails like those which custom obliges us all to wear of an evening. His chest was confined by two stiff leather belts, and waistbelt he had none. His trousers were tight, and his legs unprotected by any kind of gaiter on the march. Lastly, instead of the Martini-Henry, he was armed with the old flint Brown Bess; and, to complete his comfort, he was obliged to shave close, not even allowing the hair to grow on his upper lip. That these men marched well, fought well, and endured every kind of fatigue without grumbling, the histories of all our wars bear ample testimony; but that they had greater difficulties to contend with than the men who have succeeded them in the ranks cannot be denied. It was with men thus armed and equipped that we marched through the Bolan Pass; and on the eighth day after leaving Dadur the force emerged on the high table land of Quetta, and pitched camp about a couple of miles from the town of that name.

A more beautiful spot than Quetta and its immediate neighbourhood could hardly be found in any part of the world. The land is covered with gardens, in which all the rarest fruits of Europe grow plentifully, and are of a very large size. The climate at the time we arrived there was delightful, the mornings being chilly enough to make an overcoat pleasant; the sun shining brightly, but not too hot; and the temperature being such as one experiences in mountainous regions situated in tropical countries. The force that encamped there was about six thousand strong, and the news from Cabul being for the moment peaceful, both officers and men set themselves to work to inaugurate different kinds of amusements. We had soon a very fair racecourse, with some twenty horses in training, and a race meeting announced to come off in some two months. There was very fair shooting in the vineyards and orchards about, and we all looked forward to passing as pleasant a summer as was possible under the circumstances.

But, unfortunately, we had reckoned without our host, or, rather, without taking into consideration the climate of the place. This latter, after we had been encamped about six weeks, proved detestable. Officers and men, old and young, Europeans and natives, one and all suffered from diarrhoea, which in most cases soon became violent dysentery. In a very short time our hospitals were full, and nearly half the officers of the force were on the sick list. The deaths caused by this dreadful pest were more numerous than they would have been had we gone through a most sanguinary engagement with the enemy. In my own regiment I have seen as many

as eight soldiers buried in one day; and during the five months we were in camp there, we buried no fewer than a hundred men and three officers. This, of course, was enough to make the place hateful to us all.

The reasons given for the epidemic were many and various. Some of the doctors declared it was owing to the water; others to the fact that we had no wholesome liquor to drink; whilst several held to the theory that in the hospital stores of medicines the proper drugs to cure this complaint were entirely wanting. But, be the cause what it may, the effect was such as I have described. There was hardly a healthy man in the whole camp. The soldiers who were not in hospital, and the officers who were not on the sick list, were weak and utterly unfit for any hard work. Why the authorities did not at once move us on to Kandahar is difficult to imagine. In three months' time we resembled a large number of invalids much more than a corps of English soldiers, and looked forward with the greatest anxiety to the day when we should be ordered away from the place.

In time, but not until late in the autumn, the order came to march on Kandahar, and join General Nott's force in camp there. Such a body of walking ghosts as we appeared when the route came to move has seldom, I think, been seen in the British army. As I said before, we left about a hundred men in the graveyard at Quetta, and about fifty more had to be invalided and sent down through the Bolan Pass and Scinde to British India. The regiment had marched into Quetta at the end of February close upon a thousand strong; the day we left there it had fallen away to something less than eight hundred, of which at least a hundred were in hospital, and about a hundred and fifty who were convalescent had to be taken on camels, for they could not walk. That the climate of Quetta had a great deal to do with our sickness may be reasonably inferred from the fact that no sooner had we got clear of the place than the health of the men began to improve; and by the time we were four or five marches on the road to Kandahar, many of the soldiers in hospital, and the greater number of those who were too ill to march, were able to return to their duty.

The road between Quetta and Kandahar lies chiefly over an open plain. Here and there short defiles have to be gone through, but none of these are of a nature to stop a well-commanded force, even if opposed by a very large irregular body of armed men. On account of the sickness which had prevailed amongst our troops, the distance between the two places was divided into numerous short marches of about ten to twelve miles each. In an open level country like the one we were passing through, the baggage animals were always able to keep well up with the column. In fact, after all the wear and tear, and harassing duty of the Bolan Pass, our march to Kandahar seemed more like a holiday trip than an expedition into what was so soon to become an enemy's country. There was on the road a great deal of cultivated land, but we had strict orders not to depend on the country for supplies, but to take everything with us. We halted and pitched camp every day near some village, of which the inhabitants

invariably came forth to sell us fowls, eggs, milk, and a kind of white butter which looked very much like cream cheese, but which had a sour taste.

In one respect the Afghans do great credit to their forefathers, who are generally believed to have belonged to the lost tribes of Israel. Like most other Orientals, they are great adepts in the art of making a bargain. They always asked us about ten times the value of their wares, and about four times the amount they intended ultimately to take. But, apart from this peculiarity, they were by no means an unpleasant people to have dealings with. The natives of this, the southern part of Afghanistan, are all great sportsmen; and after cheating our messman into paying for poultry or eggs about three times what he would have been charged in the west-end of London, they were always ready, and without expecting any remuneration, to show us where snipe, red-legged partridges, or other game could be found.

A few marches after leaving Quetta, our force had been overtaken by a Parsee shopkeeper, who with thirty camel-loads of wine, beer, hams, potted soups, and other kinds of what in India are called "European goods," had set out from Sukkur determined to try whether he could not earn an honest penny with a field force which he knew to be destitute of such comforts. His pale ale was bad; his wines, if possible, worse; but, perhaps, worst of all were what he had as eatables. But this made no difference with men who had not the means of spending their pay, and who for months past had drunk nothing better than commissariat arrack. This Parsee dealer arrived in camp about twelve noon, and before six p.m. had sold everything he had brought with him, including the camels that had carried his stores, at a profit of something like 500 per cent. It is true that his breakages on the march must have been great. It is also a fact that in coming through the Bolan Pass he had to pay a heavy blackmail in order to avoid being murdered and having his things looted. But, notwithstanding all these difficulties, our friend went back to Bombay with something like a couple of thousand net profit in his pockets. On the whole, however, our march was far from an unpleasant one. What between the game we killed, and the very indifferent wine we had bought from the Parsee dealer, our evenings were spent agreeably enough; and it was only upon nearing our destination that we learnt how badly matters were going on at Cabul, and how likely it was—as it afterwards but too truly proved to be the case—that they would be worse before they were better.

On our last day's march into Kandahar we were met some five or six miles from the city by General Nott and a number of officers who had come out to welcome us to our new quarters, and, after Anglo-Indian fashion, to ask us to breakfast and dinner at their respective messes. It was here I met for the first time the two brothers Chamberlain, who have since taken such an active part in our Indian wars. They both belonged to the Bengal Native Infantry, but were doing duty with a newly-raised irregular corps called "Leeson's Horse." To our great surprise, and not a little to our satisfaction, we were ordered to move into cantonments where there were already British officers. Our men, too, found bar-

racks ready for them; and, considering it was the first time for three years that they had slept under the roof of a house, they bore the change with great equanimity. Our road to the barracks lay through the chief bazaars of the city, and as we passed along these "he who ran might read" that we were now in an enemy's country. With the exception of the shopkeepers and others who hoped to make money by our advent, the glances cast upon us were certainly the reverse of friendly. Here, as in other Moslem countries, when fanaticism was preached to the people they certainly took advantage of the same. At the best of times the Afghan would never show mercy to an enemy; and I am sure that if the town of Kandahar had been canvassed, a vast majority of the population would have been in favour of cutting the throat of every "dog of an unbeliever" that had passed through the city that morning.

Poaching v. Fishing.

TWO recent decisions, one arrived at by a judicial the other by a ministerial or administrative authority, will be welcomed with delight by all true lovers of the angle. At Keynsham, in Somerset, the county magistrates, sitting in petty sessions, have fined a certain Mr. Francis Sampson in the full penalty of five pounds and costs for illegally killing and destroying fish with an explosive. Mr. William Drury, a farmer, of Publow, was walking over his grounds on a Sunday between nine and ten in the morning; and as he approached the River Chew, which bounds his farm, he heard a noise, and observed a disturbance on the bank. Suspecting mischief, he approached the spot with due caution, and perceived Sampson, with four or five other men, standing by the waterside, in a place where, as they imagined, a friendly hedge screened them from view. In a minute or two the surface of the stream was violently agitated, and a column of water and spray shot up into the air, "as high," Mr. Drury declares, "as the tops of the trees." The men then ran to the edge of the stream, which was now covered with fish either killed or stunned by the shock, and proceeded with forked sticks to pull their catch—if catch it can legitimately be called—to shore. This operation took about three-quarters of an hour, and then the poachers made their way off, their pockets, according to Mr. Drury, being literally "crammed."

Unfortunately, in the interests alike of justice and of honest sport, Sampson was the only one of the gang whom Mr. Drury knew. It is not improbable, however, that the other offenders may yet be found, for the magistrates, although they have fined Sampson, as we have said, in the full penalty of five pounds and costs, which is presumably far more than any agricultural labourer can manage to pay, have yet allowed him three weeks to get the money together, intimating at the same time that the fine will in all probability be mitigated if the names of the other offenders are given up. Thus, then, unless Sampson's companions club some ten pounds together to get him out of his trouble, they will almost certainly find themselves in a like condemnation. In any case, it is satisfactory to reflect that their

Sunday morning's amusement will have cost them more than it was worth, and they will think twice before they again go fishing with dynamite cartridges.

In dealing thus resolutely with the case, instead of meeting the offence with a nominal fine or a mere reprimand, the Somerset magistrates have rendered a valuable public service. Of all forms of poaching—not even the use of *cocculus Indicus* or "cock-anterbury" excepted—exploding a little subaqueous mine or torpedo, in the shape of a dynamite cartridge, is the most wasteful, the most mischievous, and the least sportsmanlike. It destroys small and big fish alike; it mutilates and mortally injures more than it destroys; and, if at all frequently used, it will scare the fish away altogether from the neighbourhood. In the vicinity of mines and quarries, where a charge of dynamite can be easily procured, whole rivers where fish were once plentiful have been depopulated for miles, and the statute declaring such malpractices illegal was not passed a day too soon.

Meantime the Thames Conservancy Board is also, like the Somerset magistrates, resolved to put a stop to unfair fishing, and with this view has taken a step which will win it the gratitude of all true Thames anglers, and, indeed, of all those who are in any way interested in the preservation of our Thames fisheries. At the instance of the Thames Angling Preservation Society, by which body a memorial on the subject had been presented to them, the conservators have determined to issue byelaws prohibiting the capture of fish with unbaited hooks—a process technically known as "snatching"—and totally interdicting the use of night-lines.

"Snatching" is a form of illicit pisciculture for which it is impossible to entertain even that mitigated kind of sympathy which the keenest sportsman cannot occasionally help feeling towards poaching conducted in a fair and sportsmanlike manner. A large triangle is attached to a line of fine gut, well weighted with swan-shot or a small plummet. Some "snatchers" will use two, three, or even four triangles; but the mode of operation is, of course, the same. The line is then dropped into some quiet place where fish are plentiful—a deep corner pool, or the outfall of a drain, or the mouth of a small affluent—and, as soon as the plummet has touched the bottom, is twitched violently up. It is almost a certainty that on some one or other of the hooks, and possibly on more than one, will be a fish foul-hooked.

There is a well-known North Devon story of a famous Tiverton brother of the angle who, becoming one day fairly exasperated with a large trout that had persistently refused his favourite phantom minnow, declared, with a cheerful malediction, that "if the creature wouldn't come out by fair means he should by foul," threw his minnow across him, twitched it, foul-hooked the speckled beauty in the side, and brought him at last triumphantly to the bank. Though a genuine fisherman should by rights be incapable of losing his temper, the sin was yet, under all circumstances, one which even a true disciple of Walton might condone. But to foul-hook

fish in cold blood and of malice aforethought is a crime intolerable and not to be endured.

It is to true sport what to eat peas with one's knife is to good manners, and it only remains to be hoped that the magistrates of the riparian counties will second the efforts of the Thames Conservancy, and will deal summarily and sharply with any offenders who may be convicted before them. "Snatching" for roach is the favourite Sunday diversion of the riverside rough, and the riverside rough is a person who, for many more reasons than one, cannot be too sternly and effectually put down.

Towards night-lines, however, it must be confessed, it is difficult to feel so severely as towards "snatching and dynamiting." The most legitimate sportsman has a sneaking fondness for them. There never yet lived the country schoolboy who has not set them. At sea—where they take the shape of "long lines"—they fetch up finer fish than even are brought to hand by the trawl. There is no better sport to be had than to assist in the taking up of a mile of long line in a spot where cod and ling and conger are fairly plentiful, and "dogs" not unpleasantly abundant. And even in a river, or a broad, or a good pond of the old-fashioned sort, or the moat of a country grange, a night-line has its charms. You are always sure of an eel or two, and probably of a large size, if your hooks and bait have been well chosen—*Cela va sans dire*. But there may also be a great wallowing barbel, or a monstrous perch, or an overgrown pike, or even a wily carp misled to his fate by darkness and hunger. Tench, too, are more often caught on night lines than by hand; while a line baited with alternate minnows, gudgeon, and roach is an almost irresistible temptation to full-sized trout.

Poaching, at any rate in its worst sense, the night-line hardly can be considered. Its use is art, although not art of a high order. To bait and set it properly requires experience, skill, judgment, and patience—all four of which are most eminent piscatorial virtues. But yet its use in the Thames has been most properly forbidden. Fishermen may be roughly divided into three classes. There is the thorough-paced poacher, whose means are always foul—nets, poisons, dynamite, and other such villainies—and who deliberately prefers foul means, because his sole object is to get out of the water the greatest number of fish in the shortest time, and with the least possible trouble. There is the true angler, who, if he cannot get his fish out of the water by fair means, prefers to let it remain there till another day. And, intermediate between the two, is the impetuous sportsman of the grammar-school-boy type, who prefers fair means "for choice," but who, when fair means fail, is not always so particular as he might be—as to the use of salmon roe, for instance—and whose motto is, or ought to be, "*Si possis recte; si non quocumque modo.*"

From the ranks of this last class it is that night-line setters chiefly come; nor need we interfere with their sport—such as it is—when the water holds fish enough for all. This, however, is not the case in the pleasant reaches of the Thames, where it day by day becomes more and more necessary to put a stop to over-fishing. Here the night-line butchers

fish which ought of right to fall to the legitimate angler. More especially, it works terrible destruction among the trout; and to take a Thames trout with anything but running tackle is a piscatorial sacrilege.

In forbidding night-lines, then, the Thames Conservators have used their discretion severely and firmly, but still judiciously. In waters fished to their extreme limit the night-line soon leaves no work for the rod. It is always to the real interest of the general public to protect legitimate sport, and if the magistrates do their duty, and the new byelaw is not allowed to become a dead letter, Thames anglers will, after a season or two, find a perceptible increase in the number of sizeable and large-sized fish.

A GERMAN contemporary reports a curious incident which occurred a few weeks ago in the neighbourhood of Insternburg. Owing to something or other going wrong one day in the operation of a local brewery, about 300 barrels of spoiled beer had to be thrown away as useless. By some means the liquid found its way into a neighbouring millpond, and soon there was to be seen a spectacle which would have horrified good Sir Wilfrid Lawson. The whole surface of the water was covered with fish of all ages, sizes, and sorts, executing most extraordinary manœuvres. Thousands lay helpless on their sides, as if sleeping off a drunken debauch; others revolved rapidly in the water on their own axes, and some simply stuck their noses out of water as if gasping helplessly for breath, and gazed stupidly around. The population, young and old, were soon upon the spot, and there ensued such a miraculous draught of fishes as had never been experienced within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

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The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXII.—PERIL.



MEANWHILE, John Studwick's jealous fancies passed away as his feet touched the sand, and it was with a thrill of delight that he pointed towards the lovely tropic scene before him.

"Flowers, fruit, mossy carpet," he said, fervently. "Why, it is really Eden—a paradise! I could live here, I think."

There was an inexpressible sadness in his words, and Bessy's eyes filled with tears as she glanced at Hester, for she knew but too well that her brother's days were numbered.

Hester's heart was full to overflowing, and these words and her friend's sad look had touched the spring ready to gush forth. It was only by a great effort that she could keep from a hysterical fit of crying, and she was obliged to turn away.

John Studwick smiled lovingly upon his sister, though, directly after; for his heart smote him for many little harsh words directed at her in regard to Mr. Meldon; and he began to chat earnestly to her about the flowers, calling one of the men to get down a cocoa-nut or two for them, and sitting down to watch the man make a gasket or band of twisted cane with almost boyish pleasure, Bessy's eyes brightening as she saw his eagerness, and remembering the bright happiness of that scene for years to come.

For the spot was lovely, and, in the shade of the densely-foliaged trees, the wondrous blossoms of gaily tinted bellflowers hung in wreaths and gar-

lands as they festooned the undergrowth and offered their nectary cups to the humming birds that flashed in and out of the sunshine, to poise themselves on invisible wings, while each moment some new object struck the eye.

It was, indeed, a scene of loveliness to the sick man and his sister, as they rose and wandered here and there, now gazing into beautiful green glades, now looking up at the delicate lacework of some wonderful tree-fern against the sky, or against the deep blue sea, with the schooner doubled before them, as it lay mirrored in its breast. But bright as it was to them, the beautiful scene was, as it were, covered with ashes to Hester Pugh. The sky might have been dark, and the sun's light quenched, even as was the light of hope in her breast. She had thought that Dutch would have listened to her before now, and that this dreadful cloud of suspicion would have been swept away; but no, he had let her come ashore without a word, as if careless of her fate; and at last, blind with the gathering tears, she had wandered slowly away unnoticed amongst the trees, as she thought, to find some place where she could relieve her bursting heart and throbbing brain of the tears she had kept back so long.

She sank down at last upon the trunk of a fallen tree, sobbing as if her heart would break, and, as her head sank down upon her hands, she moaned in the bitterness of her spirit.

All was silent for a time, and in her grief she did not hear the rustling amongst the trees, and it was not until her hands were taken and drawn gently from before her face that she looked up, to see, with the blood chilling in her veins, the mulatto upon his knees before her, gazing with glittering eyes full in hers.

She was too much surprised and frightened to cry out, but she tried to start up and flee. The effort was vain, though; for, tightening his hold of her hands, he rested his arms upon her knees and kept her a prisoner.

"Hush!" he said; "for your own sake, be silent."

"Let me go," she panted, hoarsely.

"No, no, beautiful Hester," he whispered, loudly, his voice low with passion. "Why do you pretend that you do not recognize me, when you know me so well?"

"How dare you?" she began, in a loud voice; when the glittering eyes fixed upon hers seemed to fascinate her, and her tongue refused its office.

"How dare I?" he laughed. "Because I love you more than even I loved you the first day I saw you in that dark office in miserable, cold England. I loved you when, in those dear ecstatic days, I hung over you in your little home, when that jealous fool, your husband, interrupted our *tête-à-têtes* with his

hateful presence; and now, in this nature's paradise, I love you more—more dearly than ever, even though I have lived these many weeks only to hear your sweet voice."

"Lauré!" she panted, with dilating eyes.

"Yes, Lauré—your Manuel, who loves you," he whispered, his face now transformed, and the dull, drooping look of the mulatto gone, to give place to the flashing eyes of the Cuban. "Pish! You have known me all along. You are the only one that my disguise could not deceive. I might have known that no darkened skin, no false scar, no assumed limp, or cunning disguise could deceive the woman I love, and who loves me."

Hester struggled once more to rise, but she was powerless in his grasp, and, in the horror she felt at the discovery of this man's presence, she could not cry for help. It was to her like some terrible nightmare—there were the voices on the sands, help was so near, and yet she could not claim it.

"I was afraid that you would betray me at first, dearest," he whispered, with his face close to hers, and his hot breath fanning her cheeks; "but I need not have feared, and I waited and suffered. There, do not struggle, little one, you are so safe with me. Have I not watched him, and his cold, brutal cruelty to you—the way he has neglected, scorned one who is to me all that is bright and beautiful, and for whose sake I have hacked and disguised myself, working with a set of coarse sailors, eating their wretched fare, sleeping in their miserable den. Hester, beautiful Hester, but you will reward me for all this. You will live with me here, in one of these beauteous sunny lands where all is bright, and where the very air breathes love."

"Let me go," she panted.

"No, no," he whispered, "you cannot be so cruel. Only a short time, now, and the object of my mission is over, and then—then—Oh, my darling, I love you—I love you."

He clasped her in his arms, and, in spite of her struggles, his lips sought hers, when the sound of approaching voices made him start up.

Hester's lips moved to shriek for help; but he laid his hand quickly on her mouth, and held her tightly to him, as he whispered—

"One word—say a word of what has passed, and Pugh, perhaps all your friends, will die."

She glanced at him and shuddered, as she saw his hand go into his breast, and read in his eyes too plainly so fell a purpose that she knew she dared not speak.

"Sit down," he whispered. "I shall be watching you from close at hand. If you betray me, it is some one's death signal. You are mine, Hester. You know I love you; but I would not force your love when I know that soon it must be mine."

He pressed her back into her seat, and glided into the low bushes, her eyes following till she saw him crouch, and knew that he had his gaze fixed upon her face, and read it, so that if she attempted to betray him he might keep his word.

The horror was more than she could bear; for this discovery taught her of the danger to Dutch, perhaps to all on board. Partly from his passion for her, then, partly to watch the proceedings of the

adventurers, he had contrived to get on board, and was undiscovered. Here, then, was the secret of what she had looked upon as an insult from a half-savage sailor.

She let her pale face fall again into her hands, and sat there shivering, not daring even to answer, though she heard Bessy's voice close at hand.

What should she do? What should she do? She dared not speak now, but as soon as they were safe on board she would warn Dutch of his danger; and if the Cuban slew her, what then? She would have saved her dear husband's life.

But if he killed Dutch instead!

The thought paralyzed her, and a death-like perspiration broke out on her forehead, as she felt that she dared not speak lest ill should happen to him she loved. She essayed to rise, but sank back trembling, with her eyes fixed upon the spot where she knew the Cuban was hidden, when Bessy came in sight.

"Why, you've been crying, dear," she said, gaily, as she sat down beside her on the tree trunk. "Come, come, dear, be a woman. All will come right if we wait."

"All will come right if we wait," muttered Hester to herself.

Would it? Ought she to wait and trust, or should she warn Dutch?

Yes, she would, she said to herself, as soon as they were on board; and, rising, she accompanied Bessy on to the beach, where the first person on whom her eyes lit was the Cuban, with drooping eyelids, limping slowly along with some shellfish in his hand, so changed once more that Hester asked herself whether this scene had indeed been the nightmare of some dream.

A shout came now from the schooner, and they moved towards the boat, for the sun was beginning to dip, when another shout from behind made them turn, to see Mr. Wilson, Mr. Meldon, and the two sailors coming from their expedition, laden with beautifully plumaged birds.

They were soon on board once more, Hester sick at heart, for the Cuban had contrived to whisper to her that one word, "Remember!" and she had shrunk away shivering, feeling that she dared not speak. So great was this man's influence over her that she spent the evening in torture, feeling that his eyes were following her everywhere, that his face was at her cabin window, at the skylight; and she was in both instances right, for Lauré felt that she might betray him at any moment, and his plans were not yet ripe.

He watched, then, without intermission, with the intent of forcing her to swear some terrible oath that she would be silent; and this he felt that he could exact from her could he get the chance.

"I shall begin to think that you are going to have some relapse, Hester," said Bessy, at last, as they sat alone trying to read by the light in their little cabin; for John Studwick had gone to rest, and Bessy was sitting with Hester alone.

"Oh, no," she exclaimed, with a smile. "I am quite well."

"But you have been looking so strangely, and starting as you looked up at the skylight. Surely you

have not caught some terrible fever through sitting in that bit of jungle?"

"Oh, no—I am quite well," said Hester, making an effort to control her feelings. "The heat, perhaps, makes me nervous."

"I know," said Bessy; "you are nervous about your husband going down to-morrow."

"Yes, yes, I am," cried Hester. "I always fear when I know of his taking the work in hand himself; and he is so venturesome."

"I wish he would be a little more kind. There, I'll say no more. Good-night. He has the watch to-night on deck—the first watch."

"Has he?"

"Yes; and if he were my husband, I should go to him and ask him if this wicked estrangement was to last, because if so it should last for ever; for I would never make another advance to him."

"Are you sure he has the watch to-night?"

"Yes," said Bessy, kissing her; "and it's as dark as pitch on deck. Shall I go with you, dear?"

"No, no," whispered Hester, eagerly, as her heart began to throb. "Good night, good night."

"But where are you going?" said Bessy, playfully.

"I am going to speak to my husband," said Hester, whose face was as white as ashes, but her voice very firm, for the strength that she had prayed for seemed to have come at last, and she felt that at any hazard she must go and tell Dutch of the impending danger to them both. For it was evident from the Cuban's words, as much as from his presence, that he had some deep design on hand, and perhaps she might be saving others as well as her husband by the step she was about to take.

But he had said that he would kill Dutch if she betrayed him, and her heart seemed to stand still at the horrible thought. But no—Dutch was so strong and brave, and he would seize this villain, and so secure safety to himself, perhaps to the ship as well, by taking rapid action.

"You had better let me go too," said Bessy, smiling.

"No, no," said Hester, shaking her head; "stop here. I shall be back almost directly."

"I am not so sure," said Bessy, laughing. "There, dear, all happiness come of your meeting. You will find him right forward, I think."

Hester took a step towards the door, and then realized how weak she was; for she trembled, and felt as if she would drop. But this was no time for hesitation, and she came back to say farewell.

"Put out the light, or turn it down. I do not want any one to see me go on deck."

Bessy smiled and turned down the lamp till it was almost out; and then, opening the door gently, Hester stepped to the foot of the cabin stairs, where, as she laid her hand upon the cold brass rail, the trembling fit again seized her, for her heart whispered that Lauré would be watching her.

She recovered herself directly and ascended the cabin stairs, leaving the deep voices of the captain and the others talking behind her; and as she went on her courage seemed to increase, and, whispering to herself that it was to save him she loved, she stepped cautiously upon the deck.

All was perfectly silent, and the darkness was intense, save ashore, where the fireflies glanced and played in scintillations amongst the trees. She turned from them with a shudder, for it reminded her of the evening's encounter; and, trying to make out where her husband was watching, she went cautiously on, for there was not a sound to be heard.

The distance was very short, but she had to go to the side so as to avoid the masts and deckhouse, beyond which she felt that Dutch would be standing; and she had already reached the mainmast, when she heard a slight cough, which she knew to have been uttered by Dutch.

"He will believe me and love me again," she said to herself, with her heart beginning to throb with joy, "and I shall save him from some dreadful death—save myself, too, from that wretch."

As these words were pronounced silently by her lips, a chill of horror and a curse made her cower shivering back, as something dark rose before her, an arm was passed tightly round her quivering form, and a damp, cold hand laid upon her mouth checked the shriek with which she was about to pierce the darkness of the night.

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE SHADOW DARKENED.

IN the horror of those moments Hester Pugh felt nerveless, and after the first spasmodic attempt to shriek there was no necessity for the hand pressed so tightly over her lips, as she was lifted by a strong arm and carried back a few paces, and then held firmly against the bulwarks.

The next moment, as with staring eyes she gazed wildly about in search of help, her captor's lips were placed close to her, and words that seemed to scorch her brain were hissed into her ear.

"Have I not warned you sufficiently? But for the intense love I bear you, this moment would be your last. One plunge, and it would be impossible to save you in this darkness, and no one would realize who did the deed. Do you wish me to make use of the knowledge I gained to-day with those dynamite experiments? because, listen, I have not looked on in vain. One touch of a wire—and that I have laid—and this ship, and all on board, would be in fragments. That would have happened if you had gone forward to-night and betrayed me. Once more, listen: it is useless for you to fight against your fate, for I am not alone here; and when I cease watching you others take up the task. There. See, I release and trust you after what I have said."

He took his hand from the trembling woman's lips, but grasped her tightly still, lest she should sink down fainting.

"Now return quietly to your cabin," he continued, "and remember this. You think to save Dutch Pugh and the rest by betraying me. Instead of that you will send them to their death. Now go back without a sound."

Hester felt her arm released, and that she was free. Her first wild thought was to run forward shrieking for help, her next that Lauré would keep his word; and, controlling herself, she tottered with outstretched hands back to the cabin stairs, and reached the little cabin where Bessy was already asleep, and then,

sinking on her knees, prayed for help in this time of need.

That night of agony seemed as if it would never pass away, for Hester crouched there sleepless and watching, starting at every sound, and trembling lest the Cuban should be already putting some diabolical scheme in action. At length the day broke, and, quite exhausted, she sank into a troubled slumber, from which she woke affrighted, with the feeling upon her that Lauré was bending down trying to read her face, and tell whether she was going to warn her husband or not.

A smile of relief crossed her lips, though, as she saw that it was Bessy Studwick; and she listened calmly to her chidings, but refused to go to bed.

"It was so foolish," said Bessy, "to sit there the night through. It is not the way to get strong."

From the noise on deck it was evident that preparations for diving were rapidly going on, and now another dread assailed Hester. She felt sure that Dutch would be one of the first to go down, and she shuddered as she thought of the sharks, and determined to make an effort to dissuade him.

She was on the point of going on deck, when Lauré's words stayed her. She was watched, and if she tried to communicate with her husband, might he not interpret it as an attempt to betray him, and in an instant compass his destruction?

"If I only knew what to do!" she moaned. "If I could but warn him of the danger, they might seize that villain in time. I will warn him, at all hazards."

She was ready to die to save Dutch from peril, but she was so circumstanced that her warning would compass his destruction, and she sank back feeling at last that she could not betray what she knew.

For the moment she was reassured by hearing Dutch's voice, and directly after Bessy came to fetch her into the cabin to breakfast, where all save she were in high spirits, no one having a suspicion of the danger that threatened them. The talk was all of the treasure, and the specimen ingots that Lauré had shown them were talked of; while to Hester's horror she found that the Cuban was apparently forgotten.

It soon became evident to her that all the preparations had been made, and she followed the actors in the busy scene, to come on deck as soon as the hurried meal was at an end.

Dutch had glanced at her once, and her heart throbbed with pleasure, as she read his look as one more of sorrow than anger; and this last determined her to speak to him at all hazards.

The air-pump was ready, with Rasp dictating and ordering the men about; and had Hester felt any hesitation before, the sight of Dutch drawing on the heavy india-rubber suit determined her to act.

"I don't think their teeth would go through this," he said, coolly, to Mr. Parkley, "if they come; but we'll do what we said, and that will keep them off."

He went on with his preparations; and twice over, as she saw him nearing readiness, Hester approached, but each time, on glancing round, she

saw that the Cuban had his eyes fixed upon her, and she shrank away.

At last, however, Dutch was ready, all but having the great copper diving-helmet secured on. A stout leather belt was round his waist, heavy leaden-soled boots upon his feet; square weights of lead hung from the copper gorget round his neck and breast and back; the long tube was attached to helmet and air-pump, and a keen handy axe and a long sharp double-edged knife lay ready for placing in his belt, side by side with a heavy iron bar.

A stout wooden ladder, in joints, had been fitted together and secured to the gangway, its foot being within a few inches of the sand that lay in the midst of the sunken wreck, which, seen through the clear water, seemed, although five fathoms down, but a very little distance from the keel of the schooner.

There, too, was the signalling rope, ready for placing round him; and, to make the preparations more complete, the galvanic battery was charged, and half a dozen little dynamite cartridges, attached to as many thin wires, lay ready for hurling in the direction of any approaching shark and exploding in the water. This, it was considered, might kill it, but would certainly scare it away, while the size was not large enough to injure the diver, protected by his helmet. A careful investigation had resulted in not one of the monsters being seen, and all hoped that the explosions of the previous day had killed and scared all that they need fear for the present.

Very good theories all these, but those on board forgot that a good deal of refuse food was thrown overboard by Pollo every now and then, and that this floated away slowly on the current, and might act as an attraction to the fish some distance away.

The air pump was tried, and proved, thanks to Rasp, in excellent condition. Such of the crew as were not to work at the pump were in good places for observation, partly to satisfy their own curiosity, for the novelty of the coming experiment quite excited them, partly to keep watch for sharks and give ample warning; while a portion of the deck was roped off, where the apparatus was placed, and no one but those at work was allowed to pass the ropes. Here Rasp had arranged his coils of rope with mathematical exactness; the rope for signalling was as carefully arranged, and men stationed at the pump, to the use of which he had drilled them; and in addition a stouter coil of rope with a spring hook was ready, the spring being held in Rasp's hand.

"I think you had better have it attached, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley.

"Nonsense!" said Dutch, smiling; and as his countenance lit up, Hester thought he had never looked so true and brave before. "Why, anyone would think I was a novice, who had never been down before."

"Taint that, Mr. Pugh," said Rasp, "it's on account of those long-nosed sharks. You just have it on, and if we sees one o' the warmint coming, we'll haul you up in a way such as'll startle him."

"I'm not afraid of the sharks," said Dutch, taking up and feeling the point of the great dagger-like knife. "A man can but die once."

"My dear Pugh," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, "don't talk in that cynical way. Of course a man can only

die once; but do you think I want to go to the end of my days feeling that I had murdered you by my neglect? My dear boy, I would not exchange your life for twenty sunken ship-loads of treasure."

"Thank you, Parkley," he said, taking and wringing his hand. "I believe you."

"Then, come, you will have the rope attached?"

"No, no—it will be only in the way."

"My dear fellow, it will not. It is not as if you were going down the hold of a ship. All is clear, there is not even a rock in your way, only a few upright ribs that you can easily avoid."

"But it is such a child-like preparation," said Dutch, petulantly. "Here, give me the helmet, Rasp."

"Yah, you allus was as obstinate as a mule, Mr. Pug," said the old fellow, handing the great casque with its barred visor. "If you don't have the rope, I won't give you a good supply of wind. There!"

"I'm not afraid of that, Rasp," said Dutch, laughing. And then, as he stood with the helmet on his arm, he turned cold and stern again, for he saw Hester approach, and as she did so the others involuntarily drew away. "What is it?" he said, coldly.

"Dutch," she whispered, as she laid her hands upon his shoulders, "your true, faithful wife, who has never wronged you in thought or deed, implores you to take the precaution they ask."

"Pish!" he exclaimed, contemptuously.

"You do not believe me, dear," she continued, with the tears streaming down her cheeks; "but God is my judge that I speak the truth. Oh, Dutch, Dutch!" she continued, as she saw his face begin to work, "some day you will know all, and your heart will bleed for the agony you have caused me."

"Hester," he said, in the same low tone, "I'd give twenty years of my life to have back the same old trust in you; but it is gone—gone for ever."

"No," she replied, with a bright look beaming in her face, "it is not: the truth is coming—coming soon; and when it does, Dutch, you will come back to my heart with the knowledge that your little wife has forgiven you your injustice from the first, that she loves you more dearly than ever."

"You forgive me?" he said, bitterly.

"Yes, the wrong you have done me, Dutch. You have nothing to forgive me but for keeping my secret for your sake."

There was such an air of candour and truth in her countenance that had they been alone he would have clutched her to his breast; but he knew that they were watched by many eyes, and, restraining himself, he said quietly—

"It is enough now. Tell me this—will you, when I return—"

"You're a-going to have on that rope, aint you, Mr. Dutch?" said Rasp, interrupting them.

"Yes. You can get it ready," replied Dutch.

"God bless you for that," whispered Hester, earnestly.

"Now, go back," he said, quietly; "there must be no scene here. You need not be afraid for me. I shall incur no risks now, in the hope that, as you say, you can make all clear between us. You will explain all—everything to me, when I come up."

With a wild look of delight she was about to say yes, when she quailed and shrank away, for at a little distance behind Dutch she saw Lauré, apparently busy arranging the rope there around the deck, but evidently hearing all that was said.

"You promise?" said Dutch, sternly.

"Spare me, oh, my darling!" she moaned. "I dare not, oh, I dare not speak."

"What," he whispered, "is this your truth?"

"It is for your sake," she moaned—"for your sake," and with drooping head she crept away.

"Come, come, little woman," said Mr. Parkley, taking her hand; "be firm, be firm: he shall not come to harm."

"Not he, mum, while old Tom Rasp is alive to help," growled the old fellow.

"Perhaps you'd better go below, my dear," said Mr. Parkley.

"No," said Hester, firmly, and drawing herself up; "I shall stay."

"Then you shall, my dear; but," he added, with a smile, "woman for ever! You've won the day. He's going to have the life-rope."

The old doubts, which had been growing fainter, and which would, no doubt, have been entirely swept away by an explanation, came back more strongly again at Hester's refusal, and, with a feeling of rage and bitterness, Dutch raised the helmet, placed it upon his head, and signed to old Rasp to come and screw it on.

This the old fellow did, after securing the extra life-line to his belt, but not before Dutch had had a few words with Mr. Parkley as to the management of the dynamite and wires.

The men on the look-out could see no sharks, all being apparently quite clear; and at last, when with hatchet and knife in his belt, and the wheel of the air-pump beginning to clank, Dutch moved towards the gangway, trailing after him the long india-rubber tube, there was a loud cheer, and every one leaned forward in eager excitement.

"Now to solve the problem, Studwick," said Mr. Parkley, who was evidently excited, and who dabbed his face to get rid of the dripping perspiration. "Is it to be luck or ill-luck?"

"That I'll tell you by and by," said the captain, smiling; and, like Mr. Wilson and the doctor, he stood up on the bulwarks to help to keep a good look-out for sharks.

"Now, look here, Mr. Parkley," said Rasp, who had assumed the management, and dictated as if everything belonged to him, "just you place Mr. Jones, the mate, here, with three men to let that there life-line run softly through their hands when it's pulled, and to heave in the slack when it isn't; but when I give the word they're to run it in with all their might—take hold of it, you know, and run along the deck."

Hester Pugh's breath caught, as now, with dilating eyes, she watched her husband, who, as calmly as possible, stepped on to the ladder, and began to descend step by step, till his shoulders were immersed, when he paused for a moment, to alter the way in which the tube hung from his helmet; then Rasp, passing it through his hands, and giving a word or two of advice to the men at the pump, the

helmet disappeared beneath the surface, and in place of the hissing noise heard as the air escaped from the valve, there came foaming up a continuous stream of bubbles through the limpid water.

The men gave another cheer, and the Cuban, who had crept round, close to Hester, looked down over the bulwark, full of curiosity to see what would follow.

Down, down, down went Dutch, armed with a small, sharp shovel, made in the shape of the ordinary spade of a pack of cards; and so clear was the water that his every motion was perfectly plain to those on deck, as he stepped from the ladder to the bed of the old vessel, and after taking care that the tube should be clear of the ladder, walked slowly between the black ribs of the old galleon towards what had evidently been the stern.

(*To be continued.—Commenced in No. 212.*)

Gipsies.

BUT a few days since there was buried at Dayton, in Ohio, a Queen whose name is not to be found in the *Almanach de Gotha*; who never in her life wore crown or sat on throne; who had neither Ministers nor body guard; who, in so far as she had any idea of judges, regarded them as her natural enemies; who—for other reasons than the very sufficient one that she could not write—never signed either treaty, proclamation, or warrant; who, strangest of all, ruled over no kingdom, but who had her subjects in almost every country upon earth, and received from them a fealty and reverence that Empresses might envy her. Her Majesty's title was in the outer world "Queen," and amongst her own people "Mother;" her one name was Matilda, and she was "the eldest daughter" of the great house of the Stanleys, who for years have been the head family or kingly line of the Rommany folk, or gipsies.

Although only buried last month, Queen Matilda, it would seem, died as long since as February. Her body, however, was embalmed, and her obsequies were delayed that her subjects might assemble together from the four corners of the earth to pay her honour. On the appointed day, we are told, more than twenty thousand mourners were gathered together from all parts of the States. This, to any one who knows how news among gipsies flies from mouth to mouth, and how deep is their regard for their royal family, will not appear strange.

It is singular, however, that the funeral should have been conducted by a Christian minister, and still more remarkable that in the account given of the ceremonies no mention is made of one of the most persistent of all gipsy customs—the burning of the bed and clothes of the deceased. Religion, in the sense originally attached to it, the Rommany folk are innocent of. They have a vague belief in ghosts, goblins, elves, fairies, and other such weird and unnatural beings, and do not doubt that those who are not gipsies have gods of their own. The immortality of the soul is unknown to them, and, looking forward to no future, they regard death with repugnance, but not with fear. But, on the other hand, their reverence for the dead is peculiar to them, and is nowhere more shown than in their strange funeral customs.

When a gipsy dies, his bed and clothes are burnt—no one must use them after him. For years his wife and children and those nearest of his blood mourn for him in gipsy fashion by refraining from some usage or indulgence in his honour. They will give up spirits, or tobacco, or beer, or any other such luxury, in memory of him. Above all, "when gipsy men or women die"—so an old gipsy told Mr. Leland—"their friends don't care to hear their names again." If Matilda Stanley has left a granddaughter called after her, the child's name will henceforth be altered. Now that the old Queen is gone, "Matilda" is a word that must not be used in the hearing of her kin. Neither, may we add, is it said that her mourners buried with the deceased, as is the gipsy custom, any object of value. A Stanley or a Lee is usually buried with a gold ring at least, and there is a legend of a Chilcott who was secretly interred at night with no less than three thousand pounds in his coffin.

The gipsies, although their mode of life has changed, are still amongst us. Now that waste patches of land are few and far between, and every common has its byelaws, the gipsy encampment has almost disappeared. The tents, the travelling-cart, the rugged, wiry horses, the ragged, bronze-faced children, the woman ready to tell your fortune, the men ready, in a general kind of way, for any villainy whatever—these no longer are to be seen. The gipsy, in England at any rate, has had to give up his camp life. But he still remains with us, and still leads a wild, nomad existence. "Go where you will," Mr. Leland tells us, "you encounter at every step, in one form or other, the Rommany." Our tramps and beggars, our "travelling" tinkers, showmen, horse dealers, and "cheap jacks;" our pedlars and hawkers, our basket-makers, chair-menders, and dealers in old umbrellas, the proprietors of "knock-'em-downs," rifle galleries, and Aunt Sallies—all these, and all other such nomads of the road, are, as a rule, gipsies, and know the secret of that freemasonry which is the key to gipsy life. For the gipsies are, in truth, a race of themselves, with customs and a tongue of their own. For them all who are not gipsies are "Gorgios"—and between a Gorgio and a Rommany there can never be real peace.

Moral ideas the gipsy has none—any more than he has a religion. "Ever poor and hungry, theft seems to him, in the trifling, easy manner in which he practises it, simply a necessity." He is not—to borrow an American phrase—so much immoral as "unmoral." He knows that there are laws, and policemen, and judges; but they are things which he regards as we ourselves regard earthquakes and tempests, and tidal waves—as unpleasant manifestations of a *force majeure*, the exact nature of which we do not understand. Then, too, he is always more or less of a savage. With the one exception of horseflesh, he will eat anything. In the country, at any rate, he can never starve. Snails, frogs, hedgehogs, birds, and fish of every kind, roots of strange plants, acorns, mast—all that comes in the way of a true gipsy, he will eat.

A home is an abomination to him. A wanderer by nature, he will never stay long in any one place.

Travel where he may—picking up a living, honest or dishonest—he will always find his own folk, who can talk to him in his own tongue. "The scouting, slippery night life of the gipsy; his familiarity with deep ravine and lonely wood path, moonlight and field lairs; his use of a secret language, and his constant habit of concealing everything from everybody; his private superstitions and his inordinate love of humbugging and selling friend and foe, tend to produce in him that goblin, elfin, boyish, mischievous, out-of-the-age state of mind which is utterly unintelligible to a prosaic man." So says one who has made the Rommany a study, and who can "patter Rommany jib," or talk the gipsy tongue so well that his assertion that he is only a Gorgio has before now been received with incredulity—a true gipsy never speaking the truth unless he is perfectly certain that it will for the time being serve his purpose to do so.

Who and what are this strange folk? The problem is one as to which ethnologists and philologists have written and disputed much, and settled next to nothing. All that is certain is that many of their peculiar customs are Hindoo, and that most pure gipsy words are Sanscrit. "Naja" is Sanscrit for snake, and our English gipsies, who have never seen or heard of a cobra, call the little blood-worm of our English hedgerow "nag." To "punch" is to hit with the fist, and "punch" is Rommany for the fist. But the fist, a gipsy will tell you, is called a "punch," because to make it, five—"panche"—fingers are required. "Shaster," we may add, is Rommany for a book, and "shulam" for a greeting.

Then, too, the gipsy habits are as essentially Oriental as is the gipsy tongue. Like certain Hindoo sects, they regard their drinking vessels with especial reverence, and a cup which has once fallen to the ground must never be used again. Neither must anything, however valuable, ever again be used if a woman has once trodden on it or touched it with her skirts. Indeed, to those who have the leisure to study the gipsy tongue and gipsy habits, the conviction that the Rommany are not, as they have been supposed, Egyptians, but Asiatics, is irresistible.

Beyond this simple fact, however, we are never likely to get. For the gipsies have not only no history, but not even any traditions of their own. Their tongue, although they jealously preserve it, is not pure. The bulk of its words are Sanscrit, but it has in it, mixed up with them, scraps of *argot* from every language upon earth. But yet, with their common blood, and the power of speaking this secret dialect, the gipsies have remained, and always will remain, a race living among the "Gorgios," but apart from them. Nothing can civilize a gipsy.

The Gipsy Queen, at whose funeral her American subjects were recently assembled, was the wife, we are told, of a prosperous farmer. But her gipsy blood showed itself in every feature; she knew the hidden tongue; and, above all, she could tell fortunes and had the evil eye. A gipsy may, from mere force of circumstance, settle down and become well-to-do in spite of himself. But the gipsy instincts remain with the gipsy blood, and sooner or later—probably sooner—blood will out. A gipsy he is born and a gipsy he will always be; and

"when you once become truly acquainted with a fair average specimen of a gipsy, pass many days in conversation with him, and, above all, acquire his confidence and respect, you will wonder that such a being, so entirely different from yourself, could exist in Europe in the nineteenth century. You will find a character so entirely strange, so utterly at variance with your ordinary conceptions of humanity, that it would be a very difficult task for the very best writer to convey to the most intelligent reader an idea of his subject's nature."

A Hunt in the Rocky Range.

WE had just reached our camping ground among the Freeze Out Mountains, and so favourable did all indications appear for game that the whole party were eager to investigate at once the country in which we had stopped. Behind us the mountains rose vertically to a height of some 2,000 feet, and at intervals of about half a mile were seamed by deep gorges, in which the quaking aspen brush grows in the greatest profusion. On the rocky slopes of these ravines the mule deer, so universally misnamed black-tail, delights to feed, and among the dead timber, farther from their mouths, the grizzly bear, always avoided by hunters, should have his lair. On the undulating table-lands, reached after mountains had been climbed, we shall be likely to find the stately elk; and the high peaks of granite or the volcanic dykes, which at intervals intersect the beds of olden rocks, will perhaps be frequented by that great object of each western hunter's ambition—the big horn, or Rocky Mountain sheep.

Naturally, then, we are anxious to explore localities of such promise, and the evening of our arrival, there being still two hours of daylight after we had finished supper, we made a *reconnaissance* of the mountain. The almost vertical slope of the ascent was rather appalling to one who is so little accustomed to mountain climbing on foot as myself, but, by selecting a game trail which zigzags to and fro on the hillside, I thought the climb might be made without too much exertion. Mr. Phillips and I then took this trail, while Mr. Reed ascended by a route which, although more precipitous, was somewhat shorter. Hardly had Mr. P. and I reached the trail when we stopped, in great excitement, to examine it. The path was worn down nearly a foot into the dirt of the hillside, and was perfectly covered with elk and deer signs, most of it not more than a day old. It looked as if hundreds of heads of game were in the habit of traversing the path each day. So we advanced cautiously up the mountain side, almost forgetting, in our anxiety and excitement, to feel tired or out of breath.

The ascent finally accomplished, we proceeded slowly over the rolling upland, and, as we entered the dead timber by which most of the plateau was covered, came suddenly on a fine buck antelope which was feeding among the trees. He bounded off without any notice from us; we were after larger game. The mountain upon which we were separated by a deep but narrow cañon from the one which Mr. Reed had climbed, and before we had proceeded very far on our way we heard half a

dozen shots in quick succession, showing that our companion had found game.

We were following fresh elk tracks through the thick, dead timber, when something moving off to the left caught my eye, and before I could distinguish what it was, Mr. Phillips dropped to the earth, and seemed to try to make himself as small as possible. I imitated his example at once, and from my prone position made out the forms of a number of stately elk, moving with slow and majestic steps through the forest. They were all bulls, and some of them had magnificent horns. Evidently they had not seen us, but the shooting on the other side of the cañon had made them uneasy, and they were slowly travelling away from the noise. Their horns, although full grown and nearly hard, still bore the velvet; and it was interesting to see how slowly and carefully they moved among the trees, turning their heads with the greatest care to avoid striking their horns against the branches. As they passed along we counted eight of them, all with fine horns, the two leading animals especially bearing heads that would be hard to equal. A moment more and they have disappeared behind some high rocks, and we are hard after them.

A few moments later we round a point of rocks, and see the herd standing among the timber, about two hundred yards off, while the leading bull has mounted a little knoll, and stands with eyes, ears, and nose intent to catch any sign of danger. He is almost concealed by the trees, but there is a little space, about twelve inches wide, through which I can see his shoulders. Phillips whispers, "Now, Professor," and with the greatest care I shoot for the shoulders. The bull does not move. I have missed him, and, bewildered by the echo, he does not know whence the report comes. Another shot is followed by a mighty crash, and the splendid animal, with pierced lungs and broken shoulders, is struggling among the fallen trees. The remainder of the band flee at once, without giving an opportunity for a shot at them by Mr. Phillips, and we advance to our game. What a superb creature! How he compels our respect even now, when his life is so nearly spent. The blood flows from his nostrils in a thick stream, showing that he has been shot through the lungs, and only an occasional movement tells us that he still lives. We administer the fatal *coup*, and the brave stag ceases to breathe.

When the work of butchering the quarry is over, the sun is near the western horizon, and we hasten to our camp, pausing at the point where we commence to descend to admire the wondrously beautiful scene spread out on all sides. The peaks of the mountains are gilded everywhere by the declining sun, while the brown valley below lies in the shadow. Yet this is not without its bits of light, for it is dotted here and there with little lakes, which still seem to gleam and sparkle, although the sun's rays no longer strike them. At different points, high up on the hill-sides, the light still falls upon the deep red strata of the Triassic beds, which alternately flash and pale like the glowing coals in a furnace; then, as the bright rays cease to reach them, fade and grow cold again.

Throughout the plain, which lies at our feet, the courses of a dozen streams may be traced by the winding lines of dark green foliage—aspens and willows—nourished and kept fresh by the cool waters which pour down from the granite hills. But the surpassing feature of the whole picture, so extended and widely varied, was the sky. Over the western hills the sun, in all its splendour, was slowly disappearing, while above and around him, yet in no way dimming his brightness, were banks of clouds, gorgeous beyond description, and reaching, though with gradually decreasing brilliancy, almost to the zenith. Here the clear sky was still of the palest blue, while towards the east the colour dimmed till it became a dusky purple, and above the summit of the eastern hills hung a single point of silver light—the evening star.

As the last gleam faded from the mountain top, we turned, and silently took our way down the slope. While still only halfway from the summit, we heard a sharply-echoing shot, and then another; and looking towards the foot-hills, we saw a splendid buck springing down one side of a cañon, and then up on the other, while several hundred yards distant stood Reed, gazing regretfully after the escaping animal. Proudly the buck dashed on, making for the trail by which we were then descending; and we crouched low behind some rocks, to see if he would follow it up the mountain. But when he reached the path, he put his nose to the ground, sniffed the grass tainted by our footsteps of two hours before, and scornfully throwing back his head, sprang out over the prairies, and in a few moments disappeared from view in a distant ravine. Arrived in camp, we learn that Reed has killed three yearling bull elks and two mule deer bucks, and that he has seen abundant fresh bear sign. We have now far more meat than we can use, but there are several camps of herders in the valley to whom we can give the surplus.

The following day Reed and I ascend the hills, to secure our meat and the horns of the largest elk, while Mr. Phillips starts out for bears, and he found them—several—in fact, more than he wanted. The way of it was this: It seems that he had advanced some distance into the mountain, seeing plenty of elk, but disdaining to shoot at them, for nothing less than a bear would satisfy his ambition. Having reached a level spot, free from undergrowth, but thickly covered with dead timber, he paused to rest, and, while standing by a large tree, was delighted at seeing a moderately large bear come up over the hill, pursuing a course which would bring it within fifty yards of the hunter. "Ha!" said P. to himself, "I will let him pass me, so that I can give him a quartering shot behind the shoulder;" so he prepared to slay the bear. But before it was time to shoot, the head and shoulders of a second appeared, following in the tracks of the first. Our hunter's transports were somewhat moderated by the appearance of bear No. 2; but still he determined to try them. He thought, however, that it would be well to make sure that there were no more coming, so just before shooting he cast a hasty glance towards the hill, and beheld a sight which caused him to abandon all notions of bear-killing for that day—for

he saw approaching a third bear, resembling in size, according to the account, nothing so much as a load of hay.

All thoughts of shooting, except in case of necessity, being given up, Phillips cast a wary eye about him for a good tree to climb; but, alas! all that were within reach were bare of bark and branches, and so smooth and slippery that even a sailor would have difficulty in ascending. There was nothing for him but to remain quiet, in the hope that the bears would pass him without discovering his presence, which they finally did. Although the relation of this adventure was very amusing, and caused unbounded laughter in camp, there is no doubt that Mr. P.'s course was the only wise one that could be adopted. To have attacked three bears would have been foolhardiness; for, in case of any accident, if one's rifle failed to work properly, the result would be certain death. All old hunters avoid bears, if they can, and advise others to do the same, and it cannot be doubted that the advice is good.

However, we got a bear during our stay here; but it was more by good luck than good hunting. One morning, not feeling quite well, I remained in camp, and Mr. Reed ascended one mountain while Mr. Phillips climbed the other. Tom, our driver, accompanied the former to gather a painful of raspberries, which grew in the greatest profusion among the rocks on the hillside. Just after passing the spot where lay the remains of a deer, killed two days before, a bear appeared trotting along among the rocks, not more than forty yards distant, and coming directly towards the two pedestrians. Reed shouted, and when the bear stopped and raised its head, shot it in the neck. It fell down, but at once sprang to its feet, only to receive another ball, this time in the face, below the eye. It then rolled some feet down the hillside, and, getting up on its hind feet, tried to walk up the slope, where a third shot gave it its *quiescent*. While all this was going on, Tom was dancing wildly about, flourishing a six-shooter, and, while himself manifestly in a high state of excitement, imploring Reed to be cool and make every shot tell. The animal proved to be a grizzly bear, about eighteen months old. Several times we watched by baits which we placed on the mountains, but, though bears came and fed on them, they never did so while we were lying in wait.

Game was so abundant near our camp that it was with great difficulty that I could restrain my companions from slaughtering it in far greater quantities than were necessary for our own use. On one occasion, when we were all out together, their feelings were especially lacerated. We saw half a dozen small bands of elk, containing in all over one hundred individuals, and approached always to within one hundred yards, and often much nearer; but returned to camp without firing a shot. We had already all the meat that we could make use of, and to me it was far more pleasure to watch the graceful and unconscious creatures than it would have been to kill half a hundred of them.

It would have been an amusing sight could any one have seen us lying concealed behind rocks or brush, myself in the middle, glass in hand, watching each motion of the elk, while Reed and Phillips on

either side were occasionally sighting at the fattest of the band, but always heeding my reiterated entreaties of, "Pray, don't shoot!" To me the chief delight in hunting large game consists in being able to approach my game within easy shooting distance. It is a great satisfaction to be able to circumvent a creature like an elk or deer, all of whose senses are sharpened by constant use and are constantly on the alert. After you are within range, it is merely a matter of careful shooting, and the mere killing for killing's sake presents few attractions to me.

To observe unseen the habits of large game affords me, however, the most unmixed satisfaction, and happily I have had abundant opportunity to gratify this taste while at this camp. It was my good fortune on several occasions to watch for a long time bands of elk, deer, and antelope, which were perfectly unconscious of my presence, and certainly no more charming sight could be imagined than the groups of graceful animals, old and young, browsing through the lovely parks or lying on the hillsides. As I watched the bands of elk, I could distinguish with my glasses each movement of the various individuals as they passed before me, the bulls and cows sedately feeding, or rubbing themselves against the trees, and the calves now taking a bite of grass, or vigorously punching their mother's bags to make the milk flow more freely. Sometimes two calves, in a frolicsome mood, would chase one another over the grass, and, occasionally stopping and rearing up, would pretend to fight, playfully striking at each other with their sharp hoofs. How delightful, too, to watch the antelope, innocent yet watchful, and ready to bound away at the first suspicion of danger.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER XLVII.—WHAT MA MERE KNEW.

"YOU mad fool, Jean! you shall listen, and you shall hear all," cried *ma mère*, furiously; "and I will torment you till you see that you are *bête*. The little worker—the pink doll—is not for you; and you shall not have her. But it was good sport, Jean—rare sport, Jean. That sniff woman, poor fool! told me. He carried her down the stairs—carried her down in his arms, of course, for he loves her; and let him marry her if he will—who cares? for she is not for you. Do you hear, *bête*?—he carried her lovingly down in his arms."

Jean winced as he sat in his old place at the window, but pretended not to hear, though from the working of his nostrils it was plain how eagerly he drank in every word.

"No, Jean, she is not for you," cried the old woman. "I hate her, and you shall not love her, but some one else; for she has always set you against me. I know—I know all—all—all!" she exclaimed, muttering and nodding her head. "He struck down the Jarker—big wretch; and then the Jarker waited hour after hour, hour after hour, into the dark night, and watched for him till he was talking to the painted woman, and struck him down too; and then I saw more too, and I was not going to tell—oh, no—though I think he killed her. But no, no, Jean, I

would not tell, for I have my plans; and pah! there are plenty more painted women. But no, no, Jean, you shall not have the pink doll. You must love me, Jean, till I tell you to marry."

The young man writhed in his chair, but he spoke no word; while his mother knitted furiously, clicking her needles and smiling maliciously as she watched him sideways.

"No, no, Jean, you shall not have the pink doll; and you cannot see her now—they are gone."

"But she will come," cried Jean, angrily, with something of his mother's spirit bursting forth.

"No, no!" half-shrieked his mother; "she shall not—I will not have her. But no, she will not come, you *bête*, for the preacher is ill with the Jarker's blow, and she nurses him and smooths his pillow. Fool!" she cried, in a sharp, cracked voice, "I will torment you to death if you tear not the hateful little thing from your foolish heart. You shall only love me till I tell you. But now, listen: it is dark now, and I have my plans. The Jarker is away, and the police hunt him. Now listen, fool, while I tell you. They may take him, but I hope not yet; for you shall be rich, Jean—you shall have money and all that the great people have, and plenty of fine dolls shall be proud to have you, Jean; for I am proud of you; and what was she? Bah! nothing. I know the Jarker's secret—I know it two years; but he does not think it, for I have been still and waited two years, Jean—more. He suspect me once, but he dare not touch me, and I have given him no chance since. And should I tell till it was time? No, no!"

Ma mère leaned over towards her son, and casting down her knitting in her eagerness, one of the dogs ran to pick it up, but she struck the poor thing angrily with Jean's crutch, and it ran yelping back to its corner. And now she whispered long and eagerly in the young man's ear, till his cheek flushed and eyes sparkled, for he was coupling all he heard with the name of Lucy Grey.

"Gold and silver—much silver and rich things, Jean," hissed *ma mère*.

"But have you seen them?" cried Jean, eagerly.

"Bah! no; but what then? Why was he out night after night? To catch birds? Bah! no, but to pluck birds of their fine feathers, gay feathers, rich feathers; and he has a store. I know it."

"But he may come back," said Jean, huskily.

"Do I not say the police hunt him? They have been here to seek him," hissed his mother; "and when I have taken his honey I will show his empty nest, and they will send him to the galleys. Yes, yes. But come, fool. There," she said, kissing him, "thy *mère* loves thee, Jean. No, no—lean on me; you must leave the crutch, it is noisy. No, no—he dare not come back here to be taken."

Ma mère placed a piece of candle in her pocket, along with a box of matches. She then led Jean to a chair by the door, left him seated, and went softly back to the window, which she opened, and then gazed down into the court, and anxiously at the windows where there were lights. Then, once more closing the window, she returned to her son, opened the door, and listened. But there were voices on the stairs; so, thrusting Jean back, she leaned over

the balusters to try and hear who waited below, but without avail; so she returned to the room.

"But we will be rich, Jean—rich," she whispered, "and there shall be no more of this pinching for bread. You shall not have poor workers, but ladies glad to see you smile, *mon fils*," and the old woman cast her lean arms round the cripple's neck, kissing him fondly, though he remained thoughtful and impassive, apparently listening to the impatient movements of some sleepless bird.

"But listen, Jean—it was very horrible; but I saw all, and I shall tell some day when it is time. I saw the Jarker strike the preacher down, for I had been watching too. I came back late, and saw the Jarker and hid myself; because he is a savage, and I would not meet him by night never since I knew his secret; but when I was hid, and he had struck down the preacher, I saw him run this way to cross the road, but the painted woman dash at him and hold him, fighting fiercely with him, till I would have helped her—but I was old and weak, Jean. Then he struck her down, Jean—such a coward, cruel blow—but she clung to his legs, and he kicked her, so that I hear his boot upon her poor head, and I felt sick, Jean, but I dare not speak; and as he came closer I shrunk in the doorway and watched, for he ran into the court; but the painted woman was up, and ran again, and caught hold of him, and held on, and I could hear her say just inside the court there, 'Give me my child—give me my child!' and he struck her down again. But once more she held to his legs gasping, and saying, 'My child—give me my child!' and in her fierce, angry way she seemed to crawl and wind up him like a serpent, while—ah, Jean, I am old and coward, and I shivered and trembled to see it all. There was no noise, only the fierce whisper 'Give me my child!' and I saw him strike at her again and again in the face, while she held her poor head down in his breast that he should not hit her; till at last they fell, and I heard her poor head strike the stones, and I sink down on the passage floor, Jean, for I could not bear it, and I don't know how long for; but when I look out again there was nothing in the court—nothing but the miserable light—and I dare not go out and see, Jean, for I was frightened. I think perhaps he killed her, poor painted woman, and I am sorry; for she loved her child as I love you, Jean, and would die for you; but stop, and then the police shall know, and they will take him—but not yet. Poor painted woman! I have not seen her since, and the preacher has her child. And it is not ungrateful like you, Jean. Ah! do I not cry long hours for you, and you do not mind, for you think always of the doll, and I hate her? She coaxed you from me with her soft white skin and her cat's ways. She is deceitful, and tries to make the preacher marry her; but he shall not yet, for I will tell him something that shall frighten him. But there, bah! let him marry her, and take, too, her old imbecile of a father, and the weak, crying mother—let him marry them all. But you—you shall be rich, Jean, and keep no more birds. You shall have doctors, and get rid of your crutch, and people will be proud to know you."

But Jean spoke not—only sat listening to his

mother's words as he built up some bright future and thought of Lucy Grey.

At last *ma mère* rose again from the seat she had taken, and went to the head of the staircase; but still there were voices to be heard, and this time, without coming back, she sat down with her pinched cheek leaning against the balusters, where she remained patiently listening quite an hour, when she softly rose and whispered to Jean as she supported him; and then slowly and painfully the strange couple made their way down to the passage, where, after waiting for a few minutes, they crossed the empty court, and stood in the dark entry of the opposite house.

Late as it was—nearly twelve—the door stood open; but even if the old woman's catlike step and the slow, painful shuffle of her son had been heard, they would have excited no attention, as stealthily she helped Jean along, until they stood at the head of the cellar-steps.

"Ah!" hissed *ma mère*, as she kicked against something soft, "but it is that Bijou who has followed us. Back, then!" she hissed, striking at the dumb brute, whose soft patter was now heard along the dark passage as the animal scuffled away. "Now, mind," whispered *ma mère*, as they descended slowly, while once Jean slipped and nearly dragged the old woman headlong to the bottom; but he saved himself by grasping the rough railing, and, after recovering his panting breath, another trial was made, and they stood at the bottom, when, feeling her way along, *ma mère* led him till, still in the dark, they stood in the front cellar, where the water dripped hollowly into the tub. But the woman well knew her way; and, with one arm round her son, she helped him along to the arch, warned him of the step down, and so drew him into the back cellar and along to the end, where she left him leaning against one of the bins, while she stole softly back to the cellar-steps to listen for awhile before returning to strike a match and light her piece of candle, which she screened by holding it far into the bin.

"No, Jean," she muttered, "he dare not come back, for there is a police always on the watch for him, though I have not told. But, hush! don't speak," she whispered, as a heavy step was heard to pass along the court; and all the while the light shone strangely upon her sharp withered features and the sorrowful face and wild eyes of Jean. "Hold this now," she said, softly; and once more she went nimbly back to the cellar door to listen, when, closing it gently, she hurried to the side of her trembling son. "You fool," she muttered, sneeringly, "you shake, and there is nothing to fear. Now hold the candle low, and shade it with your coat."

And then, going down upon hands and knees, she crawled into the bin before her—one that was deep and narrow; and, panting and sighing with the exertion, she scraped away a little of the blackened sawdust, and thrust her hands beneath what appeared to be the brick end of the bin, lifted it a little, and then thrust sideways, when the whole back slowly slid along, disclosing an opening which the whitewashed stone had before covered.

A little more hard thrusting, and Jean could see

that there was apparently room to pass into what appeared to be another cellar, while a cold, damp, foul-smelling vapour rushed through, and nearly extinguished the candle.

"Come, quick, Jean," panted *ma mère*, making her way through the opening, when Jean crawled into the bin, and handed her the guttering candle, before following her through the hole, against which he kneeled hesitating; but directly after he crept through, and stood beside his mother in a little cellar surrounded by bins similar to those in the one they had left; then, having stuck the candle amongst the loose damp sawdust, *ma mère* drew the stone flag back into its place, for it ran in a rough brick groove at the bottom, while at the top it was kept from falling by a large iron bar roughly laid in a couple of staples.

"Now look, now look," hissed *ma mère*, taking the candle in her hands and peering about; "wine, old wine in bottles, put here and forgotten. And what is this?—my faith, it is a melting-pot;" and she paused curiously by a large black-lead crucible, fitted upon a rough brick furnace, whose chimney was a piece of iron piping, carried up apparently into one of the house flues. By its side in an old box was a quantity of charcoal; and in another several pounds of saltpetre, evidently used to augment the fierceness of the fire, while by the side lay a pair of bellows—instruments which had before now caused angry words to issue from Mr. Jarker's lips. "Now look, Jean—but what ails you, fool? Look at the boxes; there, that is where the rich things are." And her lean fingers clutched and clawed, and opened and shut, as she held a hand out towards a rough chest.

Jean was gazing with astonished eyes around him at the gloomy place; at the bins half full of empty bottles; at a couple of boxes that lay in one; but, as his mother spoke, he was leaning towards one corner of the cellar, where there seemed to be an opening, which was lightly covered with an old box-lid.

"What is that?" he whispered.

"What? fool!" exclaimed *ma mère*, going to the lid and lifting it; when the foul wind rushed up, and once more nearly extinguished her candle. "Pah!" she ejaculated—"a way down into the drains, and oh, my faith, Jean, but it is the rats' hole; but," she chuckled, "he dare not come, the ferrets and dogs are after him, and he will soon feel their teeth. So, my faith! he had two holes."

As she spoke she hastily closed the place once more, listening the while to a musical trickling noise which came whispering up; but, led by some strange impulse, Jean went down upon his knees by the hole; and lifted the lid again, peering down into the black darkness, and listening to the hollow, echoing noise, while from apparently a distance came a rushing sound as of a stream through a large sewer, and the young man shuddered as he listened to its strange wild cadence.

"Come here, fool!" hissed *ma mère*—"come, hold the candle;" and broken glass cracked beneath her feet as she crossed the cellar towards a box in one of the bins. "Come, Jean, here are the treasures, boy; but, oh, look here! It is what I thought:

here is the painted woman's veil;" and she picked up a small net fall, that had evidently from its torn appearance been snatched hastily from a bonnet. "He must have dragged her down here, Jean; and then—there is that hole!"

Mother and son stayed gazing at one another with dilated eyes and parted lips, till, dropping the lid, Jean crawled shuddering away, as an echoing sound came up caused by the falling cover. Mother and son seemed fascinated for a few moments, as they pictured in their own minds the scene that might have taken place in the damp cavernous place where they stood; and then, forgetful of her main object, *ma mère* crept closer to her son.

"But it is very horrible!" she murmured; and as she spoke she wiped her forehead with the scrap of lace in her hand, but only to throw it down with a shudder the next moment.

"Do you think he killed her, then?" whispered Jean, in a harsh, dry voice.

"Hush! don't speak, don't talk of it," hissed the old woman, who seemed quite unnerved, and trembled violently.

"But where do the drains go to?" whispered Jean.

"Into the big river," said *ma mère*. "But come, quick—there are the boxes, Jean, and let us get away from here. I hardly breathe. But oh, my faith, look there!"

Jean Marais gave a cry of horror as he clutched his mother's gown; and then they remained silent for a few moments.

The candle had burned out!

CHAPTER XLVIII.—PEACE.

WHAT were the thoughts of Aunt Fanny as she ushered in Lucy Grey, the bearer of her answer to a note she had received? Strange thoughts, no doubt—thoughts of the time when her own hands were like her cheeks, plump and soft, and dimpled; but she said no word, only kissed the visitor tenderly, held her in her arms a minute, to gaze in the blushing face, and then with a sigh, half of pleasure, half sorrowful, she led the way to the door and opened it for the humbly-dressed girl—nay, not humbly-dressed, for Heaven had clothed her with a beauty that in a higher sphere would have been called peerless. Aunt Fanny then closed the door, and went back to the sitting-room, to smooth the stiff plaits of her poplin and black apron, and shed a few tears.

Aunt Fanny stood by the window, gazing into vacancy; but her look could not penetrate to where Lucy was kneeling, like some fair penitent, beside the easy chair where Arthur Sterne sat, propped up by pillows. There was a desire to flee again when once she was there, but Lucy's hands were prisoned, and even for a time the eyes were downcast; but then those words, powerful in their eloquence—words which made the young girl's heart beat quickly—had their effect, and soon the flushed face was raised, and in the long, unflinching gaze that met his own there was all that doubting man could desire.

Ah, Arthur Sterne, you may have mumbled so that poor Aunt Fanny had to move her seat in church; but there was something now in the true

eloquence of your words that must have thrilled the heart of the fair girl by your side; for the tears of happiness fell fast as her face was buried in your breast.

Explanations? Yes, all he could wish for; and how could he blame the loving, tender heart, which saw not as the world saw, but was ready to stretch forth her hand to help the lost soul struggling in the slough of sin? How could he blame, as he listened to the story of Agnes Hardon's sorrow, and how she had made herself known, begging again and again so earnestly, as she asked Lucy's protection for her child, that Septimus or Mrs. Hardon might never be told of their intimacy, lest they should be of the world, worldly, and cast the wretched woman from this last hold upon something pure?

Explanations? Ay, many; and could he have done so he would have knelt to Lucy, as, weeping, she whispered to him of her wounded heart, and of how gladly she would have told him all, but that she feared his condemnation and contempt.

But there, love scenes should be matters of the strictest privacy; and if Arthur Sterne gazed long and lovingly in the pure, candid face before him, with a look of fond protection which saw nothing then in humbleness or poverty, and Lucy Grey returned that look with one from her tear-wet eyes, that saw in his face everything that was great, noble, and to be desired by the tender, untouched heart of woman—if these two joined their lips in one long kiss of love, why it seems to be only natural, and what might be expected under the circumstances.

"And poor Agnes?" whispered Lucy from where she nestled.

"Have you not seen her since?" said the curate.

And then followed much long, happy planning for the future, in which Agnes Hardon and her little golden-haired child had their share, and Somesham was more than once mentioned in connection with reconciliations.

Time will fly at such times, and after Arthur Sterne had told of his arrangements that he had already made for the child, and once more related his interview with Agnes, smiling at the pain of Lucy as he lightly touched upon his mishap—one that he gloried in, as he felt the maiden's soft cheek laid to his throbbing heart—after all this, and much more that both had forgotten as soon as spoken, the curate discovered that the interview had lasted more than two hours, though much of that time had been spent in a silence that neither felt disposed to break—a silence quite in unison with the doctor's orders since he had left instructions that for some days yet the patient was to be kept perfectly undisturbed.

But there is an end to all things, and Arthur Sterne did not look much the worse for his visitor when Aunt Fanny tapped gently at the door to announce another, in the shape of Septimus Hardon, come to escort his step-child back to their new home.

And that night, upon her way back, the something new that appeared to have come over the spirit of Lucy Grey was more than ever manifest; the ever-anxious look had departed, and her step

was light, bounding, and elastic as she walked on by Septimus Hardon's side; a strange contrast—now quiet and hopeful, now elate and light-hearted, as she conversed, while every topic was tinged with the future.

"And what did Mr. Sterne want?" said Septimus, as his eyes twinkled, half from merriment, half from sadness, as he drew the graceful arm he held farther through his own.

Lucy was serious in a moment; and as she turned beneath a street-lamp and looked in her stepfather's face, he abused himself roundly, for he could see tears glittering in the bright eyes that met his own.

"Don't, don't ask me, dear," whispered Lucy. "Don't talk of it now; for indeed, indeed, I could not leave you."

"Hush, hush!" whispered Septimus, soothingly, for they passed another post, and he could this time see how fast the tears were falling, and now he tried to change the conversation.

"But he's getting better now very fast—eh, my darling?" whispered Septimus.

"Oh, yes, yes," murmured Lucy. "I think so."

"And—but there, I'm making you worse. Let's talk of something else."

But Septimus Hardon's attempts at starting fresh subjects for conversation were one and all failures, and Lucy was silent until they reached Essex-street; though hers were not tears kindred to those she had shed days—weeks—months back; and as to her dreams that night, they must have been sweet to cause so happy a smile to play upon her lip; for though a tear once stole from the fringed lid, and lay like a pearl upon her cheek, it did not seem like a tear wrung from the heart, neither did the sigh which followed betoken sorrow; for it was a sigh like that sweet expiration some of us have heard when a confession has been wrung from lips we love, and those lips, when pressed, have hardly been withdrawn, but pouted sweetly, looking more ruddy for shame.

Only yesterday that they wore that look; it can't be farther back than the day before, or, say last week; and—the sweet recollection clings—"There, I do wish to goodness, dear, you would not always make a point of firing off into conversation directly I sit down to read or write. Now what is it? 'Young Fitzpater was too attentive to Maude last night?' Pooh! nonsense! sugar-candy! Why, the child isn't seventeen yet, and—"

That could not have been last week, after all. How time does fly!

CHAPTER XLIX.—IN THE RATS' HOLE.

"HUSH!" cried *ma mère*, recovering from her tremor; "but I have another piece. You fool, Jean! are you afraid to be in the dark? Here is the candle, but where are the matches?" and the old woman kept on feeling about in her huge pocket, but found them not. "You have the matches, Jean!" she exclaimed at last.

"No," said the cripple; "you had them, *ma mère*."

"Ah, yes; and I left them in the other place; but I will fetch them. Where are you?"

"I am here," whispered Jean, whom the darkness

seemed to oppress, so that he could not speak above his breath.

"But where?" hissed his mother. "I cannot tell, not yet; where is the stone?"

"Don't move," whispered Jean, hoarsely; "there is the hole, and you will fall down."

"Then come you," hissed his mother. "We cannot stay here in the dark; and I am not come to go back with empty hand."

"What can I do?" cried Jean, angrily. "I am afraid to move. Why did you not let me have my crutch?"

And now he began to feel slowly along the wall in search of the stone, but his hands only came in contact with the brick bins and empty bottles.

"Have you found the opening, Jean?" whispered his mother from the other side of the cellar. And then a cold shudder ran through the cripple, as he stood with his hand upon the stone; for there was the sound of some one falling over a piece of board, and *ma mère* shrieked out, "Oh, *mon Dieu*! I am lost!" while, standing there in the fearful darkness, and knowing his own helplessness, Jean almost swooned with horror.

"Here, quick, Jean—your hand!" cried his mother, huskily; and, on crawling towards the sound, Jean clutched his mother's arms, and dragged at her, for she was lying with part of her body in the hole, but in no real danger, though unnerved and terrified; her fancy having magnified the peril a hundredfold before she lay panting on the damp sawdust beside her son.

"Not deep, not deep," she muttered; "but, ah, Jean, it was very dreadful! I felt as if the painted woman was dragging me down."

"Hush!" whispered Jean, as they crawled farther away; "what is that noise?"

"*Bête!* would you frighten me?" hissed the old woman.

And then she paused; for now, distinctly heard, and as if ascending into the cellar through the hole, came a low blowing, panting noise—at first very soft, then louder and louder, as it came mingled with a plashing, scraping sound; nearer and nearer, and more plainly, as if some one was forcing a way along; while, at last, the panting noise was almost painful, for it was as of some hunted animal fighting for its breath.

Nearer and nearer came the noise; and with blood seeming to freeze and grow sluggish in their veins, mother and son crept farther away from the hole, till they crouched, clinging together, against one of the bins, when Jean's elbow came in contact with an empty bottle, which clinked loudly. And still nearer came the sound, more rustling, more loud panting, echoing and hollow, as if sent through some large pipe; and, hardly daring to breathe, as they listened to the heavy throb, throb of their hearts, mother and son waited the result.

Now there was a muttering noise heard along with the panting; then more rustling, and all louder and plainer; till, as mother and son crouched there with starting eyes, they could in imagination see a dripping figure emerge from the hole, and stand within a few feet of them.

Then there was a silence so horrible that to the

trembling couple it seemed worse than the coming of the noises. But there was relief at last, in the sound as of one searching amongst bottles; and then the snap as of the opening of a box, followed by the striking of matches, first one and then another. The sweat gathered upon the listeners' faces as they thought of the result of the discovery, and the probable fate of her whose veil they had seen. But, as in the sewer, nothing but faint lines of light ensued, and tiny spots where the damp matches were thrown; when, as if to show that this was no supernatural visitant, a deep husky voice growled the word "damp!" as the box was thrown impatiently down.

Then a heavy foot crunched upon Jean's hand, which he had rested upon the ground to thrust himself close to the wall; but though the pain was acute, he uttered no cry, sitting almost frozen with fear, as he heard the click of a bottle, the breaking of glass, the trickling of liquid upon the floor, followed by the sound of some one drinking, taking a long breath, drinking heavily again and again; and then something struck the young man heavily, his face was splashed with wine, and a broken bottle fell upon the floor.

Once more there was the silence, only broken by the heavy breathing of the new-comer; and then the hearts of mother and son bounded as they heard first the gliding of a hand upon a wall, and then a rough grating, which they both recognized as that of the stone being very softly and slowly slid back for a few inches, while it appeared that the new-comer was listening; and once more, in the painful silence, it seemed certain that he would hear the laboured beating of their hearts.

Once again, though, there was the grating, and they could tell that the opening was now fully exposed; then followed the rustling as of a body passing through, and, as they listened, the faint fall of steps passing along the court fell upon their ears, seeming refreshing, as it linked them once more with things of the upper world; but the next moment came the rustling sound, then the grating of the stone, and once more all was silent as the grave.

"Ah!" sighed *ma mère*, with almost a groan, as she once more breathed freely; while in a husky voice Jean whispered, "Let's go."

"Stop," whispered his mother; "I dare not move yet. He will not be gone—only waiting for a chance to get past the police; and if he see us he will hide his rich things." And the thought of the contents of the place seemed to lend force to the old woman's failing nerves; though, for what seemed half an hour to Jean, they sat in the silent darkness, waiting—a silence broken now and then by a peculiar sighing noise from the sewers, which made its hearers shudder.

"Was it him?" whispered Jean, at last.

"Yes; the Jarker," hissed *ma mère*; "but get up now. Let me help you, and we will take all we can and go. Be still and careful; and there, now you are up. But, my faith, Jean, I am cramped! Now, the boxes were here; and—"

Ma mère ceased speaking, and stood trembling, with the sense as of something lifting the hair of her bare head, for at that moment came the sound of the

grating stone pushed quickly aside; there was the sharp rustling as of one passing through, and the stone was thrust back, while the old woman could hear the panting, hard breath of some one close to her.

She would have crouched away, but she stood as if paralyzed, calling up the old interview with Jarker in the front cellar, and his great knife, and ominous words; and she felt now that her hour was come, as a voice muttered the words, "Two there!" and a heavy hand was laid upon her bare head. It was a horrible moment; but she could not move, and stood with her tongue glued to her palate, waiting for what she felt must follow; though, could she have turned, she would have clasped her withered arms round the ruffian, and cried to her son to escape. But *ma mère* was motionless, while the hideous yell that now rang in a dull, smothered way through the vault froze her blood into stagnation. Still the hand was not moved, but lay motionless upon her head, trembled and shook violently for a few minutes, and then the old woman was free; for, in a horrible voice, the ruffian shrieked—

"Come back! come back!" when there was a heavy crash as of a body falling amongst a quantity of broken bottles, and all was silent once more.

No word spoke *ma mère*, but, catching her son's hand, she drew him after her to the opening, seized the stone, which seemed to glide away at her touch, and then she thrust hurriedly at Jean as he crawled through, one hand being stretched back to seize on Jarker, should he recover from his swoon and try to touch her boy. Then she felt that there was room, and crept through herself, closed the stone with some difficulty, and made her way shuddering out into the cellar. Here *ma mère* clutched Jean round the waist, and stopped to listen, but all was silent, and apparently no pursuit; so, hurrying him along, they stood trembling once more in the passage, expecting to be seized from behind, *ma mère* seeming to feel the knife of Jarker, as she clutched at her throat and pressed on. Upon passing out into the court, though, there was a policeman; but beyond a glance, he took no heed of them till they had entered their own passage and closed the door, when he quietly made his way through the entrance they had that moment quitted.

"Cognac, Jean—drink it, fool, you want it," said *ma mère*, when they were once more safe in their own room. Before she would partake herself, the old woman forced some upon her son. "Another time, though, Jean—another time. I thought he would not dare to come back; but he will go now, and it will be safe. My faith, though, to see those boxes and touch nothing!" she exclaimed, and her hands clawed again as she spoke. "No, Jean, he will come no more, for it was as I thought; he is a murderer, and afraid. He did kill the poor painted woman; and then he was frightened, and thrust her poor body down into the sewer. But he was frightened and fainted away, for he thought it was his poor victim come back. Did you not hear him shriek it? But I will tell the police when I have his gold and silver. But a little, but a little, and then all will be right."

They neither of them felt that they could sleep,

and *ma mère* drew out her knitting, but did little, sitting thoughtfully in her chair; at last, though, Jean slept heavily, till his mother woke him in the early dawn, and together they looked down, trying to pierce the fog which hung in the court, when the first thing that their eyes fell upon was the glazed top of a policeman's hat.

"But you will not go again?" whispered Jean.

"But you are *bête!*" cried the old woman, angrily. "Should I leave the treasure I have discovered, and let the police have all? No," she cried, hooking her skinny fingers, "I will have all myself, and we will be rich, Jean. Ah! what—you sigh? But you are *bête*, and it is for the little worker who come between us, Jean. You loved your poor mother till she come, and I hate her for it, and I could slay her, for I am mad and disappointed; but I had my revenge for long. I told the preacher something, and he believed me; and you are all fools, you men. But I am not angry, Jean; for you are my own Jean, and you shall be rich yet. What! you push me away? I care not, for you shall be like your father—a gentleman—before he died, and left me in this cold, cold, cold, miserable London. But we will have the Jarker's treasure, Jean, that I have watched, and we will laugh then at the world."

Jean sat silently gazing down into the court, wincing at times as he heard the bitter words of his mother, while his eyes would then flash as he seemed ready to turn; but he spoke no word, as he thought over the past night, and restrained himself. He knew the value of money, and his face would brighten as he thought of it in connection with Lucy; but a weary, sad smile came directly after, for he knew such thoughts were folly, and he turned them to Jarker, as he seemed to feel that his duty was to point out the wretch's hiding-place, though he flinched from the task. And still he sat on, hour after hour, gazing down into the court, where a strange man, like an artisan out of work, was lounging about, smoking a short black pipe, and apparently very intent upon a small birdcage tied up in a blue-spotted handkerchief beneath his arm. There was something of the shoemaker and more of the tailor about him—nothing at all of the detective policeman; and doubtless it must have been very unpleasant for a man of his income to smoke such bad tobacco, and pay for so many half-quarters of rum for Mrs. Sims, who was very communicative concerning the last time Jarker was at home, while a policeman in uniform would have acted as a seal upon her lips.

So Mrs. Sims chattered, the strange man watched, and for a time the uniform of the police-force was not seen in Bennett's-rents.

EXPERIMENTS WITH HERRING OVA. — Dr. Meyer, of Kiel, has been conducting for some time experiments on the influence of ice in retarding the hatching of herring ova. By attention to certain details he has succeeded in retarding the hatching for forty days, and he expresses a hope that by the adoption of his method it may now be possible to bring over the ova of shad and other valuable fish from America for acclimatization in German waters.

An Austral Fire.

BY A BUSH HAND.

A BUSH fire's a terrible thing, speshully when it's in a heavy brush country. There's one good it does, and that is, it clears off the snakes and such like varmint. But it routs up the poor bandicoots and kangaroo rats, and sets the paddymelons scudding, for it don't leave a bite for 'em for many a day after. But when the first rain comes, and there's a springer young grass, the paddies come back again in hundreds on to the burnt feed. It aint a nice thing for a man to be kort in, nor I don't know as there's a more mellankollier ride than to go over miles and miles of country as has just been burnt, and afore the new springer grass comes up, and the young leves shoot out from the black trunkser the trees. Everything is black and desolate, and there aint so much as a bird nocking about just to show you as you aint the only living thing in site and hering.

I once had a close shave from a bush-fire. It was a regular ride for life two ways, and I'll just tell you how it was. When I waser living at Black Creek I had four hired men, and there was a young chap, Jerry Marsh, as had been super for Baldwin and Yeomans, stopping with me for a bit. Well, we were all good bush hands, and would do anything amost as was wanted in bush work. Well, we wanted some sawed stuff, so we cut it for ourselves, working two and two every now and again as one or two others got a spare hour or so; and we'd got amost as much cut as we wanted, when we see a bush-fire a coming down from the Wollombi ranges rite atop of us. We'd knowed for two days as one waser gathering up, and now here it was. When I see this, I yokes up the bullocks, and off we all goes to load up the sawed stuff as were at the pit afore the fire got at it. There was a flich on the pit amost all cut up, and Tom Dickson didn't want to leave it behind, so he begins a working away at it to get it orf the pit and sling it under the dray. All of a sudden he shoves it a bit to far on one side and over it goes, catching the ender the transom—the transom catches Tom, breaks his leg, and knocks him over, and he falls uponer ads and cuts his other leg. He was afeerd he was agoing to bleed to death, so I fust sends Jerry to get a horse ready for me, and then I orfs with my neckandicher, puts it loose round his neck twice, then whips a biter stick into the loose part, and twists, and twists, and twists, till I couldn't twist it no titer without cutting his leg orf, binds up the cut so as to stop the bleeding as much as I could, and then leaves the men to get him on the dray and fetch him home.

When I gets up to the hut, there I finds Jerry with two horses ready, and he'd tied bitser bagging round the toper there heads, so as to drop down over their heads.

"Hallo, Jerry!" says I, "you don't mean to say as you're going?"

"Yes," says he, "Johnny, I do. It'll be touch and go, and two'll do it better nor one." And he points to the fire which waser working ahead and no mistake in the ridges in front of us. "If we're sharp we may

pass afore the fire reaches the road, and if we don't, why then one may get through, if the other knocks under, and so give poor Tom a chance." Well, I looks at him, and he looks at me, and we both on us knows as it is a preshus ticklish job as we've got to do; but there was the poor cove a bleeding the life out of him, and no time to lose. So we jumps into the saddle. "All right, old man?" says I, "here's at it." Not a word more, and orf we went, ater smart gallop—not at full stretch, because I knew, and so did Jerry, as we might come to a pinch when we'd want everything as the poor beasts had in 'em. When we got on his track there was the fire on our rite, a crackling and taring and spitting, and every now and then regular roring up like a wild beast as it got hold of a loter tea tree scrub which grew in grate big thickets, and a warking 'em orf a most as soon as it touched 'em. The wind was ded on us orf the fire, and it was most like riding in a oven; while the noise it made was nigh enuf to stun us, and every now and then a tree or a big lim would drop and sound like a big gun, and send the sparks a flying round in a cloud. Well, we clered two short ridges and the hollers between without much damage; but when we got to the toper the third ridge, we finds that the fire had hedded us, and waser crossing the road of the ridge beyond. We were in for it, and no mistake; for I just turns my head round to look behind, and there I see it crossing the road on the ridge we'd just left. Mind you, there was no stopping. I only just looked behind, and so did Jerry.

"Johnny," says he, "this here's the pinch. Is your horse rite?" says he.

"He's rite," says I. "I've trusted my life to him more'n once."

"He go fust!" says he; and he lenes forward in the saddle, and drops the bagging in front of his horse's eyes. "If ever you rode in your life, ride now! Here's at it," says he, "and may Heaven help us!"

Now, you see, we're ruff and reddy in the bush, and we don't go in for long preachments, but whenever we do go at it we do it honest; and if Jerry had preached forer whip he could'n'ter said moren that. If we hadn't some other help nor our own, we were cooked. Driving his spurs into his horse, he dashed down the slope on to the level biter ground between the two hills, at reg'lar racing spede. It was pretty thick there wither big clumpser tall growing tea tree and a dealer undergrowth, and the fire just got in 'em as he got up. And, mind you, it wasn't a reg'lar road, but just a bit ofer dray track. Very luckily it was a good biter used, and miter been ten or twelve feet wide. As he galloped threw 'em at top speed, I could see the flames from the burning bush a curling round his body, just liker whip or a big snake, and as if it waser going to whish him rite outer the saddle and carry him orf. I suppose it was the same with me, though I couldn't see it myself; but every now and then I kept gettinger mouthfuler breth as seemed amost to burn my throte and set my internals afire.

Up the hill we went, every moment a gettinger mouthfuler this hot blast, and I waser good half mile afore we got clear of the flames. I couldn'ter

stood it much longer only that the flames kep dropping orf bit by bit, the fust pinch being the wust, only for one place just about halfway. Well, we got clerer the fire, and we pulls up our horses a bit to let 'em brethe, and then I rides up alongsider Jerry. When I comes to look at him, I'm blamed if I shudder nowed him again only that I never lost site of him. He hadn't a bit of hare on his face—it was all singed orf, and his skin looked just like the back ofer rost suking pig. I suppose as I was about the same, for he looked at me and showed his teeth, just liker possum jammed iner corner. And I showed my teeth at him the same way, for we daren't larf neither of us rite out, for ferer cracking up our faces. However, to make a long story short, we goes on at a steady hand gallop into Maitland, gets our faces and hands doctored up a bit, and then fetches out old Sloane, who wasn't a bit galled about the fire, and manages to get up to the dairy time enuf to save Tom's life; but, my word, it was touch and go with me and Jerry that time, and many's the time I've woke up in the niter dreaming of it. If there'd been a slip, or a swerve, or a cantankarousness about either of the horses, we were done for.

AUSTRALIAN vintages have now acquired a character that protects them from being sneered out of consumption. Otherwise, I would hesitate to repeat the covert and doubtless unintentional sarcasm of our black brother. Some sable sons of the soil paid a friendly visit to the station of a well-known sporting squatter. He was, unfortunately, out of grog, and his visitors were accustomed to entertainment of that kind, and would not be denied. So he gave them half a case of Champion's vinegar, upon which they commenced a carouse. After his first tumbler, the spokesman of the party, not without a wry face, very politely said, "This budgerie—very good—often drink this. Know it well—this colonial wine."—*Extract from Melbourne Paper.*

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXIV.—A SUBMARINE EXCURSION.



Those on deck the sight was curious in the extreme; for, foreshortened by the clear medium through which they gazed, the diver seemed like some hideous water goblin, with an enormous head, creeping about on the yellow sand.

But interesting as it was to those on deck, it was perhaps, more so to Dutch, who, as soon as he had assumed his helmet and began to descend, threw off all thoughts of

domestic troubles by a strong effort of his will, and feeling that the success or ill-success of the expedition depended upon him, he set to work eagerly to solve the question of the treasure. He had been down too many times to feel nervous, but, all the same, an unwonted tremor, which he ascribed to disease, oppressed him as he slowly went down from round to round; but as he reached the bottom this passed off, and finding that he was well supplied with air, and that all worked well, he began to consider how he should act. This confidence arose in a great measure from the knowledge that both Mr. Parkley and old Rasp were watching over his safety; and, feeling that his knife could be easily drawn from his belt, he began to look about him.

All was beautifully clear; and though the motion of his heavy boots stirred up the sand, it sank down again directly, without thickening the water. A few yards away was the ladder, and above it, with the air tube and two ropes plainly seen running up, was the schooner, casting a dark shadow on to the bottom. Even his own shadow was cast beside him, and it seemed as if he were only walking in a medium of thickened air. He could even make out the faces of those gazing over the side, but in a blurred, distorted way, for the bright bubbles of air that ran up in a stream made the water seem

heavy overhead, though all around it was clearness itself.

His first thoughts were naturally of the sharks; but he could see nothing to fear, though he had made up his mind if one should attack him to take advantage of its sluggish action, and, instead of trying to escape, thrust boldly at the monster with his knife.

As he was looking about there was a flash of many colours through the water, and then it seemed as if the gold and silver ingots he had come in search of had become animated; for a shoal of fish, whose scales were burnished metal in appearance, suddenly darted about him, coming close up to his helmet as he remained stationary, as if in wonder at his appearance; but on his raising his arm there was a rush, the water quivered for a moment, and, like streaks of the rich metals he sought, they disappeared.

So beautiful was the scene around him—the soft sunshine, the delicious tint of the water, and the long vistas in the distance of wondrous sea growths, which ran up six, twelve, and fourteen feet towards the surface, all aglow with the most lovely tints—that the desire was strong upon him to walk on beyond the portion of the bottom that had been swept by the dynamite, and gaze upon the various natural objects around. But he had sterner work on hand, and set himself to investigate the appearance of the old hull, in whose interior he was.

For he found now that what had seemed short stumps of blackened wood were, some of them, six or eight feet high; and that while the upper portions were encrusted with grey shelly matter, the lower were of an intense black, and these had evidently been forcibly denuded by the sweeping away of the sand.

As he moved forward he gave a twitch or two at the life-line to signal all well; and then had to make the signal that he required more air. An increased supply of the life-giving stream was forced down directly, and, raising his spade, he began to investigate the bottom more closely. In an instant the bottom seemed to have become alive; for curious flat-fish, whose sides assimilated so strangely to the sand in which they lay half-buried, rose at every step, making little clouds of fine sand, and going off with a peculiar undulating motion, to settle down again, flick the sand and tiny stones over their sides by a peculiar motion of their broad fins, and the next minute they had become invisible.

As to the wreck, there was not much to see beyond the rows of rib timbers on either hand, while where he stood there was nothing but sand, which covered the whole of the interior, though now, probably, through the explosions, it was in hillocks, with their accompanying depressions.

Knowing that those above must be anxiously watching, he thrust the spade down into the bottom, and began to dig slowly and with great excitement, to find that the tool penetrated easily through; and as he raised the sand, and placed it on one side, it softly flowed back again.

"I ought to have brought an iron rod to probe with," he thought to himself, as he gave the spade another thrust down, to find that nothing obstructed him, when he became aware of a dull shock, and he was thrown down; for the water seemed to rush by him with considerable violence.

The next moment there was a violent pull at the life-line, and he was raised from his feet in a most uncomfortable position; and, but for a sudden snatch at his signal cord to signify "All right"—one which he repeated again and again—he would have been drawn to the surface.

In obedience to his signals, the rope was slackened, but he had hardly recovered himself when it was tightened once more, and but for his vigorous snatch to show that he wanted no assistance, those on the schooner's deck would have drawn him to the surface. He knew well enough now what was the meaning of the concussion, and felt how necessary it was for a diver to be full of the calm nerve and courage of a man ready to battle with difficulties, for his safety depended entirely upon his taking the dangers he encountered in the coolest manner.

The concussion was evidently due to the firing of a dynamite cartridge; but, in spite of this, here was the reason for their trying to drag him to the surface, in the shape of something dim and large, approaching him slowly, and apparently without effort. As he saw it at first coming end on, it seemed to him like some very short, thick fish, but as it neared him and grew more distinct, it swerved off to the right, and his heart beat fast as he saw from its altered position that it was a shark seven or eight feet long.

He signalled again, "More air—all right," and the tightening life-rope slackened as he drew the long, keen-bladed knife from its wooden sheath.

It was a terrible weapon, with a fine point, and about eighteen inches long beyond the handle, while its two edges were ground as sharp as a razor. Armed with this, he awaited the coming of the monster, feeling that to it he must prove as he looked, a monster as deadly in his power. For Dutch agreed that to leave the field on this first encounter with one of the creatures that infested these waters was to confess to himself that he was beaten, and morally to consent to a defeat of their project; while could he nerve himself to boldly meet the attack, and so disable his enemy by skilful tactics as to kill it, or compel its retreat, he would give himself so much confidence, and Rasp as well, that they would in the future have little compunction in descending, and scarcely any fear of their dangerous enemies.

"If I fail," he said to himself, bitterly, "well, it is a horrible death; but why should I mind dying? I have nothing to live for now.

"Bah! Dying!" he went on, mastering his trepidation, and feeling a savage energy of will. "I, a man with reasoning powers, with ingenuity enough to help to invent the apparatus by which I can stay

down here and meet this creature, with arms in my hand, in his own element. Pooh! it is absurd. I shall—I will it."

He had plenty of time to think, and he had once more to impatiently signal "All right," for he became aware of the tightening of the life-line; while the shark, with its curious, crafty look, undulated by him, its long, unequally-lobed tail waving softly as it nearly passed him with the greatest apparent ease, turned, sailed back some little distance, and then turned once more as if to pass him on the other side.

"That is where he has the advantage," thought Dutch, as he saw the ease with which the creature glided along, on about a level with the top of his helmet, and knew, for his own part, what an effort it needed for him to move through the water.

He felt very little alarm now in the excitement of these moments, and, as he watched the shark's manœuvres, he grew more and more determined to make this the test of the future. He had often read of how the South Sea Islanders made no scruple about bathing where there were sharks, and how ready they were to attack them in their own element; while, protected as he was on head, back, neck, and breast by his copper armour and weights, he felt that it would be cowardly to retreat.

"Poor thing! I hope she cannot see me now," he muttered, as for a fleeting moment his thoughts reverted to Hester. Then, with set teeth and knit brows, he waited the coming of the shark, feeling that his one most vulnerable point was the air tube, and dreading lest the creature should make a snap at that in passing. For either that or the continuous stream of bright air bubbles had evidently excited its attention, and for a few moments it swam up eight or ten feet, giving Dutch a good view of its white under-portions, and the great gash of a mouth, that seemed as if formed by one cut of a large knife.

The creature came down again, though, directly, in the most leisurely way, gazing full now at the helmet, and, poising itself almost motionless in the water, it remained gazing straight at him, while Dutch awaited the attack.

This was not long in coming, for the shark, after altering its position once or twice, and descending to about the level of the young man's shoulders, made a forward movement, but with no great rapidity; and Dutch gave a sharp signal once more, to ensure liberty of action before the shark, as it came gliding through the clear water as if to seize his left arm, rolled softly over on its side, opened its great jaws, which glistered with saw-like teeth, and was in the act of closing them, when, with a thrust like lightning, Dutch buried his knife to the hilt between the monster's pectoral fins, which offered a fair mark, dragged it out, and prepared to strike again.

As the blade entered its yielding body, the shark gave a spasmodic jerk, and shot straight up, with the water becoming tinged with a ruddy hue; but turning, it darted down once more, leaving a red trail behind it, and again made to attack.

There was a sudden tightening of the life-line, but Dutch met it with the signal, "All right," just

before the shark once more approached, turned over to seize him, and again he received the full length of the blade; while, as the monster darted forward and dragged itself free, it was at the expense of so fearful a gash that a cloud of blood darkened the water, the shark struggled feebly for a few minutes, and then floated, belly up, to the surface.

Dutch gave his knife a wave or two through the water to remove the blood, replaced it in his belt, and stood gazing up at the ruddy cloud above his head for a few moments, gave a signal or two with the rope, such as would show them on deck that he was unhurt, and, stooping down, once more took his spade to try the sand.

It was with a strange feeling of elation that he resumed his task, knowing now, as he did, that by the exercise of ordinary courage a man might readily defend himself from any of these monsters. In fact, so far from feeling alarm now, he was ready to encounter another whenever it might appear; but now the only one in sight was the creature floating far above his head, and more distinctly seen each moment, for the ruddy cloud was becoming rapidly diffused, and the outline of the schooner's hull and the ladder, which had seemed misty and dull, were now well defined and plain to see.

Dutch now began to feel that he must soon ascend once more, but, not wishing to do so without making some discovery, he thrust down the spade here and there, in all directions, but encountered nothing. It was evident that if the treasure was there it must be far below the sand that had gone on accumulating for centuries.

There was one place, though, that he had not tried, and that was the depression scooped out by the dynamite, a spot which he had reserved to the last. Wading here, then—a task which necessitated his passing right under the schooner, and farther from the ladder than he had yet been—he began to examine the surface, and, detecting nothing, he thrust down his spade, working it about so as to make it penetrate farther and farther down, but still there was no resistance, and, hot and weary, he was about to give up, when he thought he would try once more.

This he did, thrusting in the spade and forcing it down till his hand was nearly on a level with the sand, and then—Yes! No! Yes! there was a slight obstruction.

He forced it down again, his heart beating painfully the while; for here was the test.

It might be only a copper bolt in the rotten old wood, or a stone. He might have reached the rock below the sand; but a second thought told him that the keel must be eight or ten feet lower, and that the touch was not that of stone or rock. Neither could it be wood. It was either a metal bolt or that of which he was in search.

Dutch forgot now all about the necessity for ascending—his sole thought was the sunken treasure; and, working as vigorously as he could in his cumbersome garments, he shovelled out the sand, though it was a slow and laborious task, as it kept running back into the hole he made.

Still he dug down, more and more, till he had

made a fair-sized excavation; when once more thrusting in the spade, he found it checked against something, and his heart sank as he fancied he might have struck upon a bed of old shells. Still he persevered—not that he expected to lift that which he touched, but in the hope that he might reach it more easily, and satisfy himself that he was touching metal.

He was getting quite exhausted, and had already been down far too long. Nothing but the strong desire to have something definite to say kept him toiling on, and at last he unwillingly gave up, when something dark amongst the sand he had thrown out took his attention, and, reaching down, he picked up a lump of shells concentered together, and with an impatient gesture he was about to throw them down again, when it struck him that they were uncommonly heavy. To an inexperienced man this would have passed unnoticed, for the difficulty of telling the difference of weight in so dense a medium as the water was not one easily mastered; but Dutch had been down too many times not to have a good idea of such matters, and checking himself just as he was about to throw the mass down, he raised it to the front of his helmet.

Shells, shells, nothing but shells of several kinds, joined together by the calcareous deposit of some kind of sea worm; but, all the same, it was very heavy; and, wrong or right, determining to take the lump up with him, he turned to go under the schooner and reach the ladder.

For, he argued, those little ingots the Cuban had shown them had shelly accretion attached to them, and it was probable that a good deal had been knocked off. At all events, he must ascend now; and going slowly along, placing the piece of concrete in a net pouch at his back, he was in the shadow of the schooner, with its keel nearly above his head, when a peculiar sensation that he knew too well suddenly attacked him. His head began to swim, blood seemed to gorge the vessels of his eyes, and a horrible sensation of oppression to attack his chest.

Already exhausted by his too long stay and extra exertion, combined with the nervous excitement of his fight with the shark, he was not master of himself, and, in spite of his old experience, he literally lost his head, becoming so unnerved that he sank down upon his knees, forgetting his signal line, and tugging at the helmet to get it from his head.

One drag at that thin cord should have been sufficient to secure help, but it was forgotten, even though he touched it with his hands as they went to his helmet; and, to make matters worse, he was kneeling now out of sight of those on deck, and for the moment all was over. He was blind, for a thick darkness had as it were come over him, mentally and bodily, in the intense horror of the moment; but through that darkness flashed scene after scene of the boat, and he saw Hester, looking young and beautiful, gazing pityingly down at him, but without stretching out a hand to save; while, with a smile of triumph upon his countenance, there stood Lauré, the bane of his existence. Then came pleasant thoughts of his old childish days, mingled with a dull sense of drowsiness that it was impossible to

fight against, and then a reaction, as Dutch made a violent effort to reach his feet, but only to sink down prone upon his face.

For though, like some gigantic sea worm, the india-rubber tube meandered over the sand, out of the shadow of the schooner into the sunshine, and then straight up towards the surface, the supply of air had stopped!

CHAPTER XXV.—A CRAFTY FOX.

IT was with a feeling of intense agony that Hester Pugh watched her husband as he stepped on to the ladder, and gradually descended below the surface of the water, and then with beating heart she altered her position, going beyond the others and leaning over the bulwark, so that she could peer down into the clear water, and follow his every motion.

It would have been painful enough if they had parted lovingly, but, with the knowledge that his doubts had been strengthened by her refusal to explain, her position was doubly painful. In bygone days, before their marriage, Dutch had been one of the most successful and daring of divers, more from choice than necessity; but of late he had devoted himself to drawing and making plans, at her desire, though his old love of submarine adventure was strong within him still; and now it almost seemed as if his resumption of his old pursuit had been caused by hatred of her.

For the time being all thought of the hidden peril to which all on board were exposed was swallowed up in the present danger, and, not noticing who was her nearest neighbour, she watched the progress of her husband with the great drops of anguish starting to her forehead. Every movement he made was plainly to be seen by all on board, and when Mr. Meldon first raised the cry of "Shark!" so intense was the interest in the proceedings that no one paid the slightest heed to her. Thus it was, that in a state that made her ask herself sometimes whether this was not some wild dream, she saw the bustle on deck accompanying Mr. Parkley's efforts to drive off the unwelcome visitors, of which there were two. A cartridge was thrown, and exploded close to one of them, with the result that it seemed to sink to the bottom, for they saw it no more, while, when the other was seen to be making straight for the diver, the cry arose that he should be drawn up, and, under Rasp's direction, the men were starting the life-line with a run, when—

"Hold hard!" cried Rasp, "he's a-signalling 'All right.'"

"But it is madness!" cried Mr. Parkley and the captain in a breath.

"He's a signalling 'All right,'" cried Rasp, sternly. "You never should touch a diver when he does that. See there."

Rasp quickly pulled the line, so as to tighten it, when the impatient jerk at the signal cord came again.

"Can you see exactly what is going on, Mr. Meldon?" said the captain.

"Yes, quite plainly," was the reply; "he has his knife out, and is going to fight the shark."

Hester had already seen this, and had shrunk

aside, covering her eyes with her hands, fearing to listen to the conversation that ensued, as Mr. Meldon described in vivid words what we already know. She heard, too, the various impatient suggestions that Dutch should be drawn up, and in an agony of supplication she prayed that this might take place; but always, till she felt that she hated him with an intensity of dislike, she heard Rasp's harsh voice dominating the others, as, with the sense of responsibility that he had the diver's life in his hands, he absolutely refused. He was lord of the proceedings, having been invested by Dutch with his duties, and he maintained his position, after nearly yielding two or three times and tightening the life-line.

"There, you may say what you like," he growled, "I know my dooty, and I'm a-doing on it. You should never meddle with a man as is down till he asks for help—go on with that pumping, my lads, keep it up," he said, interrupting his didactic remarks to admonish the sailors at the air-pump—"cause if you do, you means well, p'raps, but you only flurries the man, and that's the very thing as you oughtn't to do. Do you know what would make the best divers, Oakum?"

"No," growled that worthy.

"Cowcubers, 'cause they're so cool. Now, lookye here everybody; he's going on as right as can be. Mr. Dutch keeps on giving the signal 'All right,' so why should we interfere? I'm master o' this descent, and he sha'n't be interfered with."

"But, you madman, there's a huge shark just going to rush at him!" cried Mr. Meldon, excitedly.

"Then I'm very sorry for the shark," said Rasp, coolly. "Lor' bless you, Mr. Dutch is too much for any shark as can swim. Madman, eh, Mr. Doctor? What would you say to me if I called you a madman for not letting me interfere when you'd got your patient a-going on all right, and just because I thought he was in danger? My patient's a-going on all right. There, he says so himself," he continued, as the customary signal passed along the line.

"Rasp is quite right," said Mr. Parkley, who stood there with a cartridge in one hand, the wire in the other, and the battery between his feet. "A diver should never be interfered with."

"There, hear that?" said Rasp, watching the tube where it descended into the water.

"But look! Good heavens, it is horrible!" said the doctor.

Hester's hands dropped from her face, and she gazed down now, to see a thick cloud of blood rising through the water, shutting out the figure of him she loved; and, white as ashes, with eyes starting and parted lips, but without uttering a word, she gazed on.

"Well, what o' that?" said Rasp, coolly, as he held the signal-line delicately in his hand, drawing in and slackening out like a man feeling with a ground line. "He's as right as a trivet, and I've felt him all along with the line here, and he's give the shark such a one-er. I felt him let go at it."

"I'm afraid it is his own blood," exclaimed Mr. Wilson.

"For heaven's sake be silent, Mr. Wilson!" cried

Mr. Parkley. "There, you've made Miss Studwick faint."

In fact, Bessy, standing by her brother's side as he watched the whole of the proceedings, had sunk down softly on the deck; but when the doctor turned to help her, John Studwick angrily repelled him.

"It was your horrible talk began it, and that long fool's finished the work," exclaimed John Studwick. "Now, go back and see the shark killed. I can attend to my sister. Send for some cold water, father," he added, as the captain came up.

But it was needless, for Bessy was recovering fast, and after looking wildly about for a few moments she sat up by her brother, and held his hand, with her back turned to the group on deck.

"Bah!" ejaculated Rasp, coolly. "There, keep clear o' that chube," he shouted. "It's shark's blood, that's what it is, and you'll see him turn up by and by. Here he comes—no, he aint turned up yet. Now he's going down again. There," he cried directly after, as the line glided softly through his hand, "Mr. Dutch has given him another. Look at the cloud rising again, and—ha! ha! ha! What did I tell you?"

As he spoke, Hester saw the form of the shark rising slowly through the ruddy cloud, till its white belly gleamed in the sunshine; and Rasp pointed out with delight the two great gashes through which its life blood was passing out, while the monster made a few ineffectual struggles to recover itself, and then floated slowly to leeward.

"There aint many about here just now," said Rasp, "or else that blood would have brought 'em round. Ha! there won't be much of him left by to-morrow morning. Serve him right, for interfering with divers."

Hester's eyes closed again for a few moments, as her heart went up in grateful thanksgiving. Then she was watching the gradually clearing water till she could see her husband once again; and as she saw him moving it was with a feeling of hope that he would come up now.

But, as we know, he passed right under the schooner, and there were more spectators crossed over to the other side to watch his efforts, while she, faint and exhausted with her emotions, sat down on a coil of rope, gazing at the tube that passed close by her, Rasp having set a goodly length free as soon as he found that Dutch was on the move; and she had seen this long snake-like pipe creep out well over the side as the diver went farther and farther away, knowing that it was the bond which held him to life, and feeling, with a kind of fascination, that she could not explain that it was now her duty to watch the tube, and see that it was not touched.

As she felt this, she raised her eyes for a moment, to see that Rasp was standing with his back to her, and that she was alone, for all were now intent upon the diver's actions, and, just here and there, commented upon his work.

"He's found out the place," said one. "He's got something—no, he hasn't," and so on.

Just then Hester Pugh became aware of some one standing close by her, and, turning her eyes, it was to find that Lauré had crossed unnoticed to her

side, where he stood as if looking over the bulwarks for sharks, but really all the time with his eyes fixed upon and fascinating hers, while, to her horror, she saw that one of his bare feet kept touching the tube.

"I've been waiting for this opportunity," he said at last, in a low whisper. "You tried to betray me this morning."

"No, no," she moaned, as the wretch placed his foot upon the tube, smiling upon her the while.

"You will betray me, in spite of my warning," he continued, in the same low tone; "and for this, because I will not have my plans spoiled, and partly because I hate Dutch Pugh, and love you, my child, I am going to press my foot down upon this tube. Hark! dare to raise your voice in the least," he whispered, fiercely, as he saw her white lips part, "and it is his instant death. Do you understand? If I stop the flow of air for only a few seconds, he will be so startled that he will not recover himself, while, if I double the time, it will make assurance doubly sure, as you English people say. Swear now to me, by all that is holy, by all your future hopes, that you will not betray me."

"Heaven give me strength!—I cannot," panted Hester.

"My foot is pressing the tube," he hissed. "But then I know, sweet love, that you wish him dead, that there may be no hindrance to our passion."

"Monster!" she cried.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Will you swear?"

"Yes, yes," she panted.

"That you will neither by word nor deed betray me."

"Yes," she said, hoarsely. "I swear."

"Thanks, dear one," he whispered. "It is but for a few days. Mind, they have found one of my treasure stores; they shall work for me—for us—in ignorance, and bring it all to the surface. For us, Hester. You need not turn away; I read your heart, and that you will love me as I love you soon, and you shall revel in wealth like an Eastern princess. But now you must swear more; I cannot wait. I will not have those loathing looks and angry eyes directed at me. You shall swear that you will be mine when and where I ask it of you, or—"

"Are you some fiend?" exclaimed Hester, with a look of horror, as she saw his foot pressing the tube.

"No," he whispered, passionately, "only a man whom you have driven nearly mad with your beauty, and who can and will suffer no more. Have you not always been cold, and rejected me, even in spite of my prayers? Now I am driven to extremities. Swear that you will be mine, or Dutch Pugh dies beneath your feet."

"I cannot—will not," she faltered, with her senses reeling.

"Cannot! Will not! You must and shall. You know that I have but to keep my foot firmly pressed down for a few moments, and he becomes senseless. And what then? Who in the confusion will know that it was I? Swear it to me, girl, this moment. Hester, I implore, as well as command. Have I not told you my love? Listen to me. Have I not followed you here—done everything for your sake?"

"I will not swear," exclaimed Hester, in low, panting tones; and then she uttered a faint cry, which was checked on the instant, as, with a look of passionate rage that he could not control, she saw Lauré flatten the tube, and knew that it was to her husband's death.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

A Study in Insect Life.

A FRIEND of mine, who keeps a warehouse, handed to me lately the remains of a piece of ribbon which was rolled on a cylinder of wood, in the way that such goods are usually exhibited for sale in shops. This remnant of ribbon, several yards in length, was perforated at one spot through all the folds, a small circular hole having been neatly drilled through. On removing the ribbon, a hole corresponding in size was found in the cylinder, and in that hole an insect, still living, which was evidently the mechanic in the operation and the author of the mischief by which the ribbon was rendered worthless.

The question at once presented itself, how did the insect get into its present abode so as to do the work? The bolt of ribbon had been in the shop more than twelve months; the piece of wood on which it was rolled must have been seasoned for a considerable time before it was turned and made into a cylinder. All this time—perhaps two or three years—the egg, out of which the perfect insect was developed, must have been advancing to maturity, and had at length attained its winged state, ready to emerge from its burrow.

How was the egg deposited so deep in the wood, and to what species of insect did the creature belong? On examination the creature proved to be a hymenopterous insect, belonging to the family *Euroceridae*, or "horntails," as they are popularly called. The name has been suggested by the circumstance that the males have a long, prominent horn (or process) on the abdomen, while the females have an ovipositor (made up of three pieces), which is attached to the middle of the abdomen, and extends far beyond its tip. The ovipositor had a sheath composed of two pieces, each of which is narrowly spear-shaped, with minutely serrate blades. With these a small hole is bored in the tree, and an egg is laid therein by the ovipositor proper. This accounts, in the present instance, for the deposit of the horntail's egg in the wood of the cylinder.

After it is hatched, the larva commences to excavate, and makes a long, cylindrical burrow, which, in this instance, extended to the ribbon wrapped round the wood. This is always done before going into the chrysalis state, and while yet in the larval stage, though it attains its winged state while yet in the tree.

Now, it is a curious circumstance that, in multitudes of cases, the larvæ of the horntails are destroyed by the operations of the ichneumon fly in laying its eggs. This occurs in the following way: About a year after the egg of the horntail is laid, when the grub has attained a fair size, two of the largest ichneumon flies, *Rhyssa atrata* and *lunator*—species as slender as a small dragon fly, and armed

with a fine bristle-shaped ovipositor nearly three inches long—thrust them into the holes made by one kind of horntails, and lay their eggs in the living larvæ. When hatched, the new-comer feeds upon the body of its host. In this way the efforts of the horntails to propagate their species are kept within moderate bounds.

On the other side of the Atlantic one species, the "banded horntail," does no small injury to maples, especially those planted in the streets of cities; while another, called the cimbex, commits similar ravages on elms. Pine trees in England and on the continent of Europe often suffer great injury from the excavating powers of another horntail, called the *Sirex gigas* and *juvencus*. In the instance before us, even ladies' ribbons were remorselessly drilled by one of these borers, as though they were a piece of pine.

The following extract from "Kirby and Spence's Introduction to Entomology" has a bearing on the subject before us, and is in itself interesting:—"Mr. Stephens informs me that the fir trees in a plantation of Mr. Folyambe's, in Yorkshire, were destroyed by the larvæ of the *Sirex gigas*; while those of another, belonging to the same gentleman, met with a similar fate from the attacks of *Sirex juvencus*. In proof of the ravages made by this last insect, Mr. Reddon exhibited to the Entomological Society a portion of the wood of a fir tree from Bewdley Forest, of which twenty feet of its length was so perforated by larvæ as to be only fit for firewood; and, being placed in an outhouse, five or six of the perfect insects came out every morning for several weeks. When fir trees thus attacked are cut down, it often happens that the larvæ of the species of *sirex* inhabiting them have not attained their full growth at the time the wood has been employed as the joists or planks for floors, out of which the perfect insects, even years after, emerge, to the no small surprise and even alarm of the inmates. An instance of this, where several specimens of *Sirex gigas* were seen to come out of the floor of a nursery in a gentleman's house, to the great discomfiture of the nurse and children, is related by Mr. Marsham, on the authority of Sir Joseph Banks; and a similar circumstance, stated by Mr. Ingpen, occurred in the house of a gentleman at Henlow (Bedfordshire), from the joists of the floors of which whole swarms, literally thousands of *Sirex duplex* (Thuckard) emerged from innumerable holes, large enough to admit a small pencil case, causing great terror to the occupants. As the house had been built about three years (the joists of British timber) there could be no doubt of the larvæ having been more than that time in arriving at their perfect state."

I am unable to make out the exact name of the insect found in the cylinder, but it is closely related to *Sirex* and *Zephydria*. The cylinder and ribbon were both English, and the insect is quite different from the American species.

The *Hymenoptera* is a vast order of insects, including bees, wasps, and their kin, hornets, ichneumon flies, the great family of saw-flies, gall-flies, and ants. In the insects, the wings are four in number, transparent, membranous, the veins com-

paratively few, and the hinder pair smaller than the others. Their mouth is furnished with powerful horny jaws, and with a tongue guarded by the modified maxillæ. The females are armed with a many-valved sting or ovipositor.

In the Rocky Mountains.

I WRITE by the flickering light of our fast-dying camp fire, and, the inner man having been satisfied, the brain again begins to resume its sway. The occasional snapping of the burning aspen logs, the "crunch, crunch" of our mules cropping the grass near at hand, and the dismal howl of the distant coyote, are the only sounds that disturb my reveries. Close at hand lie my companions, stretched out at full length on the ground, gazing dreamily into the fire, their glowing pipes tightly clenched between their teeth. The wind whispers through the sage brush, and sometimes throws up clouds of ashes, interfering not a little with my writing; and during the lulls in the breeze we hear the subdued murmur of the stream by which we are camped. The grand old mountains, monuments of past convulsions and upheavals, tower on all sides, and, while impressing us with our own insignificance, recall to our minds the tiresome clamberings of the last three days among their crags and cliffs, and the results of our hunt in the Medicine Bow range.

Satisfied with elk, deer, antelope, and bear hunting in the Freeze Out Mountains, we, with the natural longing for the unattainable paramount ever in the human breast, had decided that mountain sheep alone would fill the cup of our enjoyment; and the day following our return to the Bow, Reed, Mort, and myself started for the source of the Wagon Hound Creek. On the head of this stream, and on its tributaries, or among the rocky fastnesses from which they rise, we hoped to strike a band of sheep which, rumour told us, held their abode in that region. It is scarcely necessary to add that Tom, our teamster, completed the quartette, he being a most necessary part of the outfit—as indispensable, in fact, as mules, waggon, tent, and other *impedimenta*.

We camped the first night on Foot Creek, at the base of the range. Nothing of interest had occurred during a very tiresome day of jolting over twenty-five miles of rolling prairie in a springless waggon, with the exception of some poor shooting at sagehens and antelope, and one excellent shot by Reed, who brought down a doe, on the "keen jump," at four hundred yards. One of the hams furnished us meat for supper which, with the excellent biscuit of Reed's concocting and a draught of crystal water from one of nature's fountains, completed a repast as acceptable to us as a far more pretentious banquet.

Next morning we were off shortly after sunrise, and by noon had reached the highest point in the cañon accessible by waggon, and made camp. The road lay throughout the whole distance, some fifteen miles, along the sides of Foot Creek, and the wooded slopes of the mountains reached high on either side. The timber was mostly dead, burned by the Indians when they deserted the hunting ground, but a second growth had sprung up and attained a height of

about five feet, and its dark recesses looked very promising for deer. We saw no game, however, nor indeed any sign of it, until far up the mountain, when an occasional elk trail crossed our path. Mountain birds, however, were noticed in goodly numbers, and prominent among them were Clark's crow, whose grating cry was almost constantly heard, the fearless Lanner falcon, the dusky grouse, the violet green swallow, and the broad-tailed humming bird with its gorgeous plumage.

Our camp was advantageously placed in a small basin within fifty yards of a clear spring which gives rise to the main fork of the Wagon Hound, and surrounded on three sides by timber; while just behind us rose a towering cliff of soft white sandstone, which stood out, fierce and beetling, like the prow of some leviathan ship. Its eroded faces, worn into a thousand fantastic shapes, and pierced by many a hole and crevice, furnished resting and breeding places for the numerous birds seen sailing through the air about its summit. Close to the top, on an inaccessible ledge, a pair of Lanner falcons had reared their brood; and to this eyrie the family would repair at close of day, saluting each other with the shrillest and most discordant screams. Above, below, and on both sides of the home of these fierce birds were hundreds of nesting places of the beautiful violet-green swallows, and these little fairy-like creatures flew hither and thither in clouds, utterly regardless of the presence of the falcons. It was a strange association, though one often seen in the West.

Immediately upon making camp we started out to inspect our surroundings. As one of the party remarked, "The country looked sheepy," but a tramp of four hours through a most attractive region failed to disclose any recent sign of these animals. At one point we struck a fresh elk trail, made by two or three wandering individuals, and later saw some tracks of deer, but were unsuccessful in our attempts to find either; and at last, tired, hungry, and disgusted, we turned our steps campward. In Indian file we traversed our silent path, over steep hills and down into deep, cool cañons. The sweet scent of the pines fill the air, and the dark, sodden ground beneath the green timber gives forth no sound. Now and then a pine rabbit jumps up in front, and, scurrying away, stops short at fifty yards, and eyes us with amazement. A dusky grouse whirrs up from beneath our feet, and skims down again into his leafy covert, surprised at the new animal that has invaded his quiet home. Just as we approach the camp a fine "black-tail" buck is sprung from a thicket of quaking aspens. He has made but a few jumps when a loud "b-a-a-a-h" from Reed stops him, and he turns his great, wondering eyes towards us. He lingers only an instant; but the stock has pressed the shoulder, the finger the trigger, and the bullet goes crashing through both shoulders, and brings the noble animal to the ground. The deepening twilight gives us time only to butcher him; and admiring his fine antlers, still in the velvet, we take some of the internal tit-bits with us to relieve the monotony of antelope diet, and hasten onward.

As we sit round our roaring camp fire that even-

ing, we listen to tales of former hunts, and to stories of the Indian fights and white men's brawls of earlier days. Each in turn contributes his experience to the general fund, and scenes and incidents are narrated which took place in the mountains and on the plains, when game was more plenty and hunters fewer.

Before we sleep it has been decided to spend the following day in collecting bird skins, and then to betake ourselves to other and more profitable fields. At break of day the deer is packed and brought into camp, and a fine fat fellow he is. Even as I write the sizzling, spluttering sound of his juicy chops, enjoyed at supper, still sings in my ears. Thursday is devoted to collecting, and some valuable skins are added to our collection. No elk, deer, or sheep, however, are seen; and so this morning we broke camp, and here we are.

The scarcity of game here is to be accounted for partly on the supposition that it is farther south, as explained in a previous letter, and partly by the fact that last winter and spring there were many tree-choppers on the head of Wagon Hound whose presence no doubt caused the animals to forsake the country.

It is a sad fact, but one that cannot be controverted, that even in the Rocky Mountains large game is each year becoming scarcer and more difficult to find; and certainly, unless something is done to protect it, we shall soon inhabit a country absolutely without large wild animals. The advocates of game protection should see to it that some steps are taken in the right direction before long.

An Adventure in Texas.

I ACTED as sheriff in California during her most lawless period, and had occasion to bring some hard characters to justice. A number of them were hung, and others escaped unhung, carrying with them a vivid memory of my features, and swearing death to me at sight. I eventually resigned my commission, and remained in the State three years after, but never was shot at sight, which you doubtless realize, unless you think my ghost is writing this sketch.

After leaving California I went into Texas, and there became a rover. I had some pretty hard knocks there, and once came near my death at the hands of some horse thieves that I had run down with a party who had suffered from their depredations as well as myself. As it was, I did not get off my bed for six weeks; and then I was more like a spectre than a man of flesh and bones. In the *mêlée* I was shot in the thigh, the bullet leaving a tearing wound, and stabbed in the right breast. At one time, I was given over; but my temperate habits now told favourably for me, and kept the skeleton away. We broke up the band, however, and that was some satisfaction.

I had scarcely regained my wonted vigour, when I met with an adventure that is worth relating, and so I have selected it from all the others to relate.

I had been off to the western part of the State on business, and was returning home in the saddle, when I reached a stream that was crossed by means

of a ferry. The boat was on the opposite side, and by the faint light of the moon, which was behind the clouds, I distinguished the signal-trumpet hanging on the broken branch of an old oak. This I blew with a will, and, hearing the answer of the ferryman, I led my horse to the brink of the river, and waited with some impatience the moment when I should see the silent ferry boat move from the opposite shore. I shouted at last—

"Come, hurry up! I'm behind time now!"

"To the deuce with your time!" was the response, in a deep and powerful voice.

I saw at once that any show of impatience on my part would only make matters worse; so I held my tongue, and kicked the sand about till I had a hole at my feet deep enough to bury a good-sized boy in.

At last the boat moved out into the stream, and I could hear the mutterings of the ferryman, which sounded like those of a sullen bull. Ere long the scow—for it was nothing else—grated on the sand, and after getting my horse in as best I could, I followed, and settled down on an empty powder-keg, which was the only seat I could find.

As seen in the dim light, the countenance of the ferryman was not prepossessing. The nose appeared to be broken, and one eye gone. Then, the jaws were heavy, and a grizzly moustache, which he was constantly biting, lent a most determined expression to the face. He was a thick-set fellow, and seemed to bear the traits of a hard customer.

When I stepped, or scrambled, into the scow, I noticed that he eyed me rather sharply; and if the moonlight had been clearer, I think it possible I might have seen something in that eye different from friendship. I ventured one or two off-hand remarks, to draw out the moody ferryman, but received only grunts in answer; so I gave up the idea of being sociable, and turned my attention to the river, or gave myself up to contemplation.

Once or twice I turned to my sullen companion, and each time caught that one deep, penetrating eye fixed on me. The first time I paid no attention to it, simply regarding the man as a rough character, inclined to suspicion, and naturally scrutinizing his passengers for want of other matters of interest to engage his attention. But the second time I was startled by an expression which seemed as if all the evil a mortal was capable of was concentrated in that single orb. I cannot describe it. I sat gazing into his sinister eye as if under the influence of serpentine fascination. Suddenly I felt a shudder, as of horror, and at the same instant the moon broke from the clouds and poured light down upon the ferryman's face. While in the swamps at the South I stumbled on an enormous moccasin, coiled up directly under me. Leaping back with a cry of horror, I escaped his fangs, but the eyes I can never forget. Their evil light shot into my brain as a bullet penetrates into the body. When the moonlight fell on the face of the ferryman, I experienced the same sensation which took possession of me there in the swamp.

But this was not all. The revelation of his countenance warned me that there was to be work between us before we reached the shore. It was the face of Dick Thurder, whom I arrested in California,

and whose father was hung for murder, committed under such aggravating circumstances that we strung him up before there could be any possibility of escape. Dick broke jail—not a difficult performance in those days—and swore to shoot me at sight whenever or wherever he might chance to meet me.

Here he was at last, and there was I. Had I been the ferryman and he the passenger, I think my first sensation would have been different; but as it was, he was at home in the scow, and assumed the appearance of the aggressor. I was not expecting to meet this desperado in just such a place and under just such circumstances, and was taken entirely off my guard. My opinion was that he failed to recognize me at first, thinking, perhaps, that I was still acting as sheriff in California; but now he knew whom he had on board, and that he would attempt to carry out his threat I had no doubt.

Now, here is the way I was situated. My revolver was in my breast coat-pocket, and it would require time to get it ready for service. A moment under such circumstances is an hour, and I saw that any precipitate motion on my part, revealing to him my discovery and my intention, would draw his fire before I could even unbutton my coat; for I well knew that he had a revolver ready at hand, as such characters always have, either to shoot a victim or resist an arrest.

I say that I shuddered when the face was revealed by the moonlight. This did not last long, and I thought best to show no feeling, but appear to be perfectly unconcerned. So I turned my eyes down the river, and remarked, carelessly—

"A fine sight, stranger. S'pose you've been in these parts long enough to know all the nooks and corners?"

"Yes, and all the contemptible scoundrels that cross here, too."

This was hitting pretty close, but I remained imperturbable.

"Ah! so you nab a few of 'em now and then?"

I turned sharply on him when I said this, and, as I did so, managed to unbutton my coat with the left hand, which was on the "off side."

"You infernal neck-puller, d'ye think to fool me again? I've got ye! You know me, and you'll know something more before you can say your prayers!"

I looked him calmly in the eye, which blazed fiercely from the moon's shadow.

Those who have had to deal with such characters know that their passions betray them into a species of madness, and the only way to get time is to treat them as you would a madman. Assume an appearance of unconcern, look them steadily in the eye, and calculate what you have got to do to save yourself. This was my policy at this time, or I should not be here to tell you of the whole affair. I quickly resolved to throw that shot, and so distract him from his present purpose by engaging him on other grounds till I could operate.

"You are a coward to kill a woman," said I, with a voice of sarcasm; and I gazed at him, as if the last thought in my mind was of danger to myself.

You should have seen his eye then! It seemed

fairly bursting from his head, and he was now growing blind with fury.

"You confounded body-snatcher!" he yelled. "I'll show you that I can kill two women."

He glared at me with that one orb charged with the spirit of murder, and dropping the rope which was stretched from shore to shore, and by which he was pulling the scow, he thrust his hand within his flannel shirt.

"Now, seize him!" cried I, as if addressing some one behind him.

Lost in his passion, he fell into the trap, and turned his head for an instant, as if to defend himself from one of my men. He saw the trick at once, but it was too late. My pistol threw off the gleam of the moonlight—a flash and report, and the body of the ferryman and desperado pitched headlong into the river. The current carried it out of sight, and I pulled the scow ashore and continued my journey.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER L.—TAKEN.

A HEART at peace, doubtless, had much to do with the rapid strides towards convalescence of the Reverend Arthur Sterne, who, in direct opposition to the hints of his medical man and the uplifted hands of Aunt Fanny, resumed his work; and not many days after the visit from Lucy he found himself, late one afternoon, in the place where so much of his past life had derived its interest. Pale and weak, he climbed slowly up to the garret of *ma mère*; but she was absent with the dogs, though Jean, more sallow than ever, sat cowering over his fire, and thinking of the events of a couple of nights before.

Jean could not restrain the deep frown that came over his forehead as his visitor entered; still, there was an inborn politeness in the way he asked him to be seated; but after replying in a constrained way to the questions put touching his health, he painfully made his way to the window, and appeared to be watching the proceedings in the court below.

But for a while Jean saw nothing, for his gaze was introspective, and the secret he held seemed more than he could bear. Ever pictured in his brain were the scenes his mother had described, and, sleeping or waking, he saw again the wild, agonized face of the murdered woman; while the knowledge that he could point out the murderer's lair, while the officers of the law watched and waited in ignorance, made him angry that he should be bound; for he felt that he was bound, as he thought of his mother's rage and disappointment should Jarker's retreat be discovered before she had ventured again to secure a portion of his spoil; and that night she was to return early, and they were to go. Jean shuddered as he thought of the last visit, and trembled for the one to come; and could he have divested himself of certain cares that gnawed his heart, and looked upon Mr. Sterne merely as the friend and pastor, undoubtedly, moved as he then was, he would have told all.

Mr. Sterne had hoped to have found *ma mère* at

home, and to have derived from her some information respecting Agnes Hardon. Once he was on the point of questioning Jean respecting her; but he refrained. He was anxious to see her, now that he knew her secret; and, certain in his own mind of Septimus Hardon, he hoped yet to procure a reconciliation at Somesham; while, at the same time, there was a dim something in his mind that he could not quite shape, as it seemed to point towards Agnes Hardon knowing something of her uncle's arrangements during his last years; but at present he could define nothing, make no plans, though he seemed to be finding the ends of the threads he sought, and felt hopeful yet of a happy termination of much misery. His duty seemed to be to bring all these people into unison if possible; if not, to call in the strong arm of the law, should he feel, after a long and patient investigation, that there was right upon Septimus Hardon's side.

"Will not your mother soon return, Jean?" said the curate, at last.

"No," said the young man, moodily; "these busy nights are profitable, and we have little money, while two nights she has spent watching."

"Watching?" said the curate.

Jean started and turned round, making as though he would speak to his visitor; but he turned his back the next moment, when the scene that met his eye chased everything else before it, and, wild and excited, he cried, "Now he is here, and you can take him! I was frightened, and dare not; come you, sir. It was he who beat you down in the street. Here, look!" he hissed between his teeth, standing almost erect as he spoke, and clenching his fists. "If I could beat him down!"

The rage in the young man's face seemed for the moment reflected in that of the curate, as, starting forward, he flung the window open, and recalled the last time he had gazed from where he stood; but the next instant horror predominated, as he looked upon the sight which had so excited the cripple.

There was a heavy mist falling, and the lamps were just alight; but out upon the housetop, and plainly seen in relief, was the figure of Jarker struggling out through the trap-door on to the platform where he kept his pigeons. He was making his way out slowly as Mr. Sterne flung open the window, for it seemed that some one was dragging at him from beneath; and this proved to be the case, for as Jarker struggled out, kicking and striking savagely, the head and shoulders of a policeman appeared, and in the fierce struggle which ensued, the man clung so firmly to the ruffian's legs that he brought him down with a crash, which shivered and crushed the frail cages and traps to atoms; and then ensued a battle for life which chilled with horror those who were looking on, both too helpless to interfere.

The platform was but frail, and cracked and broke away as the two men wrestled together, while more than one poor bird was crushed to death. Once they rose for a few moments, and rocked to and fro; but Jarker seemed to trip and fall, dragging the policeman with him; and then from the crackling and breaking tiles arose a sound more like the encounter of two wild beasts, as the men writhed and twisted, every instant nearer and nearer to the

edge, where there was only a low brick parapet some six inches high; and death for both seemed inevitable.

Jean stood as it were riveted to the spot, his lips apart, eyes distended, and chest heaving; while clutching his shoulder was Mr. Sterne, expecting every moment to see the bodies of the struggling men part in the air, and fall with a sickening crash into the court beneath.

But, no. Jarker freed one arm, and twined it round one of the platform supports, giving himself a savage wrench, and stopping the slow, gliding motion which had taken him nearer and nearer to the little parapet. Another wrench, and a savage kick, and Jarker was almost at liberty, when down came the frail platform, to fall bodily into the court.

Shouting at the ruffian, Mr. Sterne now called the attention of the gathering people below to what was going on, for it was time; but before it was possible for aid to be rendered, Jarker had forced the policeman's head back, and dragged his other hand at liberty; then came the sound of a heavy blow, as the ruffian raised and dashed his adversary's head against the tiles. Then followed another fierce struggle, the officer fighting for his life, and he held on tenaciously to his opponent; but Jarker was uppermost, and, using his great brute strength, he raised and dashed the man's head down again and again, till his hold relaxed, and he rolled over into the gutter, where he lay to all appearance dead; while, with savage cruelty, Jarker loosened a tile so as to have a firm hold, and then with his free hand he seized his enemy and tried to force him over into the court.

But he was arrested by shouts from *ma mère's* room and the open trap, at which now appeared in the dim light the eager countenance of the artisan-like man who had been hanging about the court; and now, active as a cat, with the man in full pursuit, Jarker went along upon hands and knees, over slate and tile ridge, along gutter, and past stack after stack of chimneys, to where there was a similar platform to his own; but he was disappointed—the trap-door was fast. On he went again, with Nemesis upon his track, over roof after roof again, towards a house with a dormer-window in the sloping slates; but the slates were covered with a redundant moisture, and to his horror he found that he was slowly gliding down to certain death—faster and faster—as he sat as it were upon his iron-nailed boots. A few seconds would have ended his career; but with a frightful oath, such as none but a drink-maddened ruffian would have uttered, he threw himself at full length, and rolled rapidly over and over to a chimney-stack, to which he clung, as he lay upon his face, with his feet so near the awaiting destruction that his toes rested in the slight iron gutter.

He lay there for a few moments, trembling and unnerved by the danger he had escaped, and then painfully climbing up in the angle formed by the wall of the next house, which stood a little higher, he reached the ridge, and sat astride, panting and showing his teeth at the coming officer, who was making his way more cautiously; while, dragging off first one and then the other of his heavy boots,

Jarker hurled them at his pursuer before continuing his flight.

The dangerous slope Jarker had crossed gave him an advantage over the officer; for, now unable to escape by the trap or window for which he had aimed, the ruffian had doubled, and was working his way rapidly back to his own garret, which now seemed his last resource.

For an instant he stood by the ruins of his pigeon traps, gazing at the man lying in the gutter—now showing signs of animation—and listening at the opening; but though there were voices enough in the court, all seemed silent in his room, and with one glance at his fast-nearing foe upon the roof, Jarker lowered himself through his trap; while, as Mr. Sterne hurried out of the room, with Jean following him slowly, the ruffian stood once more opposite to the bed of his dead wife, to be confronted by another watching policeman.

Not of the same stuff this man; for a moment's struggle, and Jarker was free, leaping down the stairs, which seemed ready to fall with his weight—nearly to the bottom, with the man in full pursuit; when in the buzz of voices he heard a cry for a light below, which flashed upon the hat of yet another officer.

Panting, mad, hemmed-in on all sides, foes above and foes below, knowing that there was blood upon his hands, and, for aught he knew to the contrary, that the gallows waited for him, the ruffian, as a last resource, dashed open the window upon the first landing, while, as hands actually touched him, he dropped into the back-yard.

One man leaned out directly, while another hand was at the window; but they saw Jarker in the dim light below recover himself. Then there was the banging of a door, and one of the men bounded down the stairs just in time to strike the ruffian back as he made a dash along the passage to force his way through the crowd. But he was not taken yet; though it was with a smile that the policeman wiped his dripping face as he posted himself at the top of the cellar steps, and sent a companion out to watch the grating in the court.

And now it seemed that they had run their game to earth; for after one or two ineffectual attempts to escape during the past forty-eight hours—attempts frustrated by the careful watch kept upon the premises he occupied—Jarker had that evening made his way up through the cellar in a half-maddened state, produced by fear and the wine he had drunk to drive it away, for it was many hours since food had passed his lips. But Mr. Jarker's course was run, and, though ignorant of the offence for which he was sought, there were heinous matters enough upon his conscience to make him fight for liberty to the last gasp; while, upon this last attempt being made, he had been sighted by the man on watch, who saw him in the passage and drove him back, when, horrified at the idea of going back to the cellar, Jarker had bounded upstairs, to be chased as has been described.

There was no lack of policemen now upon the spot, and while the crowd was kept back, place was given to Mr. Sterne, who, with Jean hanging upon his arm, slowly descended the cellar steps, preceded

by the policemen, with staves in hand and open lanterns.

"Keep a good look-out on the stairs," said the artizan-looking man—the quiet man of a day or two before, and one in authority. And now, inch by inch, the cellar was searched; then bin after bin of the inner vault; when the men turned and looked at their leader.

"Oh, he's here, somewhere," said the sergeant; and taking a lantern in hand, he peered long and carefully into every bin, while, trembling with eagerness, Jean pressed forward to see if the discovery would be made. He was not kept long in suspense; for, after directing his light carefully along the sawdust, the keen-eyed man suddenly exclaimed, "There's some one been through here. Here's fresh candle-grease and matches; and what's this?"

Jean pressed forward with the others, and "this" proved to be a fragment of a stuff dress caught in an old nail between the bricks, a scrap which Jean recognized as a piece of his mother's dress.

Jarker's hiding-place, or rather this entrance to his hiding-place, owed much of its strength to its very openness; for, with the house and cellar doors as it were free to the neighbourhood, many of the other tenants of the court even coming at times for water, no one would suspect the existence of a secret lair; though a careful examination of the long, deep bin, now that attention was so fully directed to it, soon robbed the spot of its mystery.

"Crowbar," said the sergeant, abruptly, and a man departed in search of the implement; while one whispered to another his opinion that, if there was another way out, they were done after all.

But now a new-comer forced her way upon the scene, after quite a battle with the constable on duty at the head of the stairs; and but for the request of Mr. Sterne she would not have obtained her desire. And now bitterly, in French, *ma mère* reproached her son for betraying her secret, though he as eagerly denied it, appealing to the curate, who freely exonerated the young man from having made any communications to the police.

"But what is the secret, *ma mère*?" he said to her, in her own tongue.

"Come away, come away," she whispered, wringing her hands; but Jean would not move; and the old woman was compelled to be a spectator of what followed.

A few blows from the crowbar, when it was brought, shivered the thin end stone to pieces, and Jean shuddered as he felt the cold, damp air rush through the black opening, as the sergeant exclaimed—

"That's sewers, my lads—there's another way out. Now, who'll go first?"

No one moved; but *ma mère* groaned.

"Who wants promotion?" said the sergeant again.

The muttering that followed seemed to intimate that all three of the men present wanted it, but not at the cost of thrusting his body into the black hole before him.

"Then I hope you'll make matters straight if I'm hurt, my lads," said the sergeant, grimly.

"That we will, sir," chorused the men; and then there was quite a competition for the second post of

honour, as, without another moment's hesitation, the sergeant crept into the bin, thrust his lantern forward as far as he could, looked eagerly round, and then, staff in hand, he regularly shot himself forward, and called to his men to follow. But there was no enemy to encounter: nothing to be seen but bins round the cellar, a box or two, the open hole, and the furnace.

"Who'd have thought of there being this place here?" said the sergeant to Mr. Sterne, when *ma mère* and her son both stood shuddering in the cellar with them; the Frenchwoman creeping towards the boxes, her fingers working the while. "Old houses, you see, sir—gentlemen's houses once; and this was an old cellar: wine in it, too, seemingly, and forgotten. Melting-pot, of course," he continued, pointing to the crucible. "Nice handy spot for it; and of course he has made himself all right before now. Gone down to one of the sewers, I suppose," he said. "And while we were hunting him t'other day, he had crawled up here, and was taking his port. Boxes, eh? what's in the boxes?"

One of the men was already examining the treasure-chests, and the agony in the old Frenchwoman's face was pitiful, as she saw the lids opened of first one and then the other, to find in place of the riches she had pictured, broken glass, worn-out crucibles, and brickbats that had formed part of the furnace.

"Rubbish!" said one of the men, when the old woman reeled, and would have fallen if the curate had not caught her in his arms and seated her upon one of the boxes.

"Nice place to go down, sir—take that old lady out in the fresh air," said the sergeant, peering at the black opening, and listening to the quick rush of water. "There," he said to one of his men, "you needn't stew. I aint going to send you where I wouldn't go myself."

The man spoken to held up his hand to command silence; for at that moment there came a strange, rustling noise, mingled with the fierce rush of water.

Before they could recover from their surprise, drenched with the foul stream, his distorted face looking absolutely fiendish and inhuman, the head of Jarker appeared for a moment at the hole.

"Help!" he gasped, with a cry that rung through the place, but before hand could touch him he had fallen back with a heavy splash: there was the sound of water rushing furiously along with a hollow, echoing, gurgling noise; and the men stood looking at one another.

"Here, for God's sake, men," cried Mr. Sterne, "do something!" And, weak and trembling with horror, he stepped towards the hole; but the sergeant had his arms round him in a moment.

"Keep still, sir," he said, sternly; "we've done our part, I think. It's certain death to go down there; they're flushing the sewers, I should say, or else there's a heavy fall of rain somewhere. He's halfway to the Thames by now."

The next moment Mr. Sterne was telling himself that he had left his room too soon, for a strange sick feeling came over him, and the place around looked misty and indistinct; but his was not the only sleep-

less couch that night, for the old Frenchwoman moaned bitterly at the destruction of the *Chateau en Espagne* which she had raised.

CHAPTER LI.—WORN OUT.

A HEAVY step upon the stairs, a heavy knock upon the door, and a heavy-eyed, heavy-countenanced man asking for Septimus Hardon.

"And he wants you too, miss," said the man. "Oh, dear—oh, dear! he was the only friend I ever had; and he came back the night afore last, after you'd been to ask for him. Not seen him, we hadn't, for long enough; and then to come back like this!" And the great fellow sat down unasked upon a chair, and sobbed like a child. "He wants to see you, sir," he said again, "and we've done all we could," he cried, pitifully; "but you see he's old, sir, and there aint nothing of him as'll hold together, and he knows it, sir; and he only laughed, and said, he says, 'Ikey, old man,' he says, 'it must be all new stuff,' he says, 'for the stitches won't hold no longer,' and he was the only friend I ever had. 'Go and tell them,' he says, 'as old Matt's taken his last copy, and would like to see 'em afore he takes the wages he's earned.' You'll come and see him, won't you, sir?—though it's no sort of a place to come to; and the missus is breaking her heart about him."

Half an hour after, Septimus Hardon and Lucy were in Lower Serle's-place, where, in the dingy back room, close to the waste paper, lay poor old Matt, with Mrs. Gross upon her knees beside the bed, crying bitterly, as the poor old man lay calm and apparently sleeping. But he started when Lucy knelt down and took his hand, to let a tear fall upon it.

"God bless you!" he whispered, earnestly, as his dim eyes recognized the face bending over him. "Come like an angel to a dying man. God bless you, sir. I'm glad you've come—I was in mortal fear that you would be too late. Tell her—but no, I will. Mother Slagg, you and Ikey go for a bit, please."

The weeping woman put her apron to her eyes, and went out with her husband. It was a heavy afternoon, and the fog was settling down fast over the City. The light struggled feebly through the window, half covered as it was with boots; but the great landlord returned directly with a thick, strong-smelling candle, stuck upon a block of wood between three nails.

As soon as the door was once more closed—a rare position for it, and one which it resented for some time, until Ikey had poked the corners clean with an awl, and oiled the lock—old Matt said, huskily—

"Put your hand, sir, under my pillow. That's it, that there little Bible. Know it, sir?" he said, for Septimus Hardon had changed colour, and his hands were trembling. "That took me a long time to get, sir." And then he slowly and painfully told what he said he would have spared Miss Lucy if he could, but it was not to be; how he had seen Agnes Hardon lying dead, she whom he knew now to have been Agnes Hardon; how he had attended the inquest, and then tried to get a Bible that had been there mentioned, seeking for it day after day, night

after night, ready to drop always, but feeling that he should succeed in spite of all. He searched the streets, he said, but all in vain; and at last he began to fear that the poor girl to whom Agnes gave the Bible had emulated her fate, when he recalled the address of the juryman, found to his delight she had been there, and through the stranger's influence obtained the prize he sought.

"And now," said Matt, "I'm happy. I can feel, sir, that I've done one little bit of good in my life, and I can go easy. Now, sir, that book."

Septimus, wondering and surprised, turned from Matt to Lucy, sobbing and horror-stricken at the old man's recital, for much of what he heard now had yet to be explained to him; but the old man was intent upon the little Bible, one that Septimus remembered to have seen at home in his father's desk.

"Now!" exclaimed the old man, with hands trembling, and eyes appealing, lest his hearers should lose anything of what he disclosed. "Now look, look, look!" he cried—"I fastened it down again, as it was before. A knife, quick! Now, look here," he said huskily, and he tried to insert the blade of the penknife given to him beneath the fly-leaf, groaning bitterly at his inability, when, with hands trembling nearly as much, Septimus took Bible and knife, loosened the paper round, and laid it open, when the first thing that met his eyes, in his father's clear handwriting, was the date of the marriage, and eighteen months after appeared the entry of his birth; while upon the opposite side, in a delicate woman's hand, were the words—

"AGNES HARDON,

The gift of Uncle Octavius."

"There, there, there, sir! That's it, isn't it, sir?" cried the old man, excitedly. "I wouldn't rest till I'd got it, and 'twas hard work, for the poor girl clung to it as the gift of some one she loved; but the more she hung back, the more I was set upon having it. I knew enough of binding to see that the end-leaf was gummed down, and under that leaf I knew there was what I wanted. Here—breath!" he gasped—"open the window."

Septimus Hardon sat gazing dreamily at the entry in his hand; it was indisputable, though he could hardly believe in its truth, while the few words he heard coming from the weeping girl seemed only to add to the confused state of his mind; but it appeared to him now that the old man's condition was the first thing to consider, and, placing the book in his pocket, he begged that he might try and have him removed to his own lodgings.

"No," said Matt, feebly—"no; I won't leave here, for somehow these people love me after their way, and I seem to think that the end should be much what the life has been; and as to doctor, sir, why I've got one here," he said, gazing fondly up in Lucy's face, "and if she'll stop here, and let me hold her hand—God bless her!—I can go easy, for it will seem to keep ill away. No other doctor's any use, sir. I'm worn out, sir, worn out!"

But Septimus would not be satisfied, and, leaving Lucy by the old man's side, he fetched assistance to his old friend.

"No hope at all?" he said, as the doctor and he walked together afterwards through the dingy shop.

"Not the slightest," said the surgeon once more, as he stood upon the doorstep. "He has never thoroughly recovered from the effects of the operations he suffered; and besides, it's the old tale with the poor fellow—sorrow, misery, starvation, on the one hand; dissipation, drink, late hours on the other. The poor old fellow speaks the truth: he is worn out."

Night came, and Lucy and Septimus still waited by the old man's dying bed. He had slept for some little time, during which interval Lucy had replied to her step-father's many queries—replied as she thought of the despair that must have prompted the awful plunge into futurity. Then the old man woke, and talked eagerly for awhile of the future prospects of the family. But soon a change came over his face, his head tossed wearily from side to side of his dirty pillow, while often he would raise it, and stare wildly from face to face, but recognizing none, sink back again with a pitiful moan.

"Lost life, lost life! Worn out, worn out!" he kept on muttering, as he tossed restlessly from side to side, frequently starting and looking round as if not knowing where he was. Then he seemed to sleep peacefully for awhile, to open his eyes once more, and smile feebly at his visitors, beckoning them to come nearer.

"God bless you both!" he muttered; "it's all over."

Septimus half rose, and would have fetched the doctor again, but Matt whispered "No."

"Don't go," he said. "He can do no good now, nor any one else; I'm past all that. It's been coming for days past, and I've fought it out; kept on till my work was done. I've never been much good, sir; but now I'm worn out. P'raps I might have been different, if I'd had other chances; but I was always weak, sir—weak."

He paused again; and Lucy's sobs were the only sounds that broke the silence.

"Ah!" said Matt again, feebly; "I've justified many a line, sir; line by line—'line upon line,' don't it say somewhere?—but I can't justify myself. Dropping out of the old forme, sir; fast—fast now. But there, sir, hold up; for I'm happy enough. You did me a good turn once, and I've tried to pay it back; and since I've known you, and you've been ready to be my friends, I've seemed to get proud, and wouldn't do anything that should disgrace Miss Lucy here. But I began too late, and I never deserved such friends as I've found; for I've been a poor, weak, helpless, drinking old galley slave. But there, sir," he said, with a smile, "my case is foul; the sorts are out; and I'm putting away my stick for good."

"May I fetch Mr. Sterne?" whispered Septimus.

"No, no, no," said the old man, wearily; "we were never friends, and I can't play the hypocrite, sir. It's too late, sir—too late! What I've done, I've done. Let me die in peace, here, with your loving faces by me; and fetch poor old Ike in, by and by, for he loves me in his way. No, sir; it would be the act of a hypocrite, I fancy, for me to

send for a clergyman now. No, Mr. Hardon, sir; stay with me to the last; and let me hold tightly by this little white hand, and I can go from you hopeful and in peace. For if the great God who sent me here, struggling on through a life of care, has made hearts so gentle, and true, and loving, that they can weep and sorrow over my poor old battered case, can't I hope that He who knows all, and has seen all my helpless weakness, will be merciful? I know, sir—I know. I might have done better: but it's been a life of drive and struggle—money to-day, starve to-morrow, and drink always, to hold up and do the work. I'm sorry, sir, sorry; but the sorrow came too late. I've had a hard life, sir; the wish for better things came too late, when I was worn, and shattered, and used up; when the day was too far spent, sir; and now the night's coming on faster and faster. Hold my hands tight," he whispered, "for it's growing dark and darker, and I'm losing my way."

And now once more there was a long silence, when the old man looked eagerly round.

"What time is it?" he asked.

And Septimus told him. Then, turning towards Lucy, the old man whispered—

"Put your hand to my lips, that I may kiss it once before I go;" but she leaned over and tenderly kissed him, when he smiled, and some words passed, but they were too faint to be heard. Then he was restless for awhile; but soon started again, to stare wildly round. "What's that?" he asked.

"Nothing but the wind moaning round the houses," whispered Lucy.

"No," he said, with a smile, "nothing but the wind—nothing but the wind waiting to scatter the dust."

And now he lay so still and peaceful, that, in answer to Lucy's inquiring look, Septimus bent over him again and again; but as he looked in that sorrow-ploughed face he could see that the old man still slept, while, with the light strong upon her face as she knelt, Lucy seemed no mean representative of the angel watching by the old man's side.

"An angel, sir—an angel, sir!" he had muttered again and again; and then he seemed to doze off, muttering the words to himself.

"Worn out," said Septimus Hardon, as he listened time after time to the faintly-borne chimes of St. Clement's; and then he thought of the present revelation, which seemed almost dearly bought in the old man's death; of the past: the office in Carey-street, and its sorrows; the bitter struggle for mere life; the lodging in Bennett's-rents; and the shabby old compositor in the frayed suit, pinching himself that he might supply their wants; the watchful care and jealousy with which he had tended Lucy to and from the warehouse; the secret they had shared, and the old man's chivalrous endurance in tracing out the information; spite of all blurs or blots upon his character, ever the same tender, true-hearted man, devoted to his friend's interests, and ready with his offering, even though it were humble as the cup of cold water that should not be without its reward. And now, worn out—the poor old setting battered and worthless, but the heart true and bright to the last.

The quarters chimed again. Isaac had been to set up a fresh candle, and then retired to his weeping partner; while, now seated upon an old work-bench, Septimus Hardon still let his thoughts wander, pausing long upon the poverty of the crowded streets of the great city; the prosperity crushing down the misery; the swiftly-hurrying stream of life, and the striving of the throng to keep afloat, as others pressed upon them, climbed upon their shoulders, or, in the madness of despair, clung to their legs and dragged them down to the muddy ooze at the bottom. He thought, too, once more of his own misery, and that of this waif, after its long encounter with the storms of life, cast up torn, weary, and breathless upon the shore.

Mournfully moaned the wind down the court and at the back of the house, making cowl's creak and spin, and rattling worn old windows; for it was no bright starry night—the clouds gathered black overhead, and sent down a pitiless rain to empty the streets, and be caught by the wind and dashed against the panes. By the feeble light in the front shop, Isaac could be seen, with his head against the wall, sleeping heavily; and, worn out with watching, his wife had returned to the next house. Now faintly heard in the lulls of the wind came the striking of St. Clement's clock and its laboured chiming, which sounded wild and strange upon the night air.

Suddenly Lucy and her stepfather started, for the old man was sitting up in bed, with one hand raised as if to command silence, and loud, clear, and strange, his voice seemed to thrill through the silence as the tones of the bells came louder upon the wind.

"Hush!" cried the old man—"the bells! I set it once, and I've never forgotten it—'Ring out the false, ring in the true'—never forgotten it," he muttered, as he sank heavily back and spoke in a whisper—"Ring out the false, ring in the true.' Hands—hands—once again; they're ringing out a false and coward heart, and ringing in the true."

Then he began to mutter from time to time words connected with his trade—wild, incoherent words, but strangely fitted to his past life and present state; while at times he spoke with such wild bitterness that his hearers shuddered, and Isaac came trembling in, leading with him Mr. Sterne, anxious at their protracted absence.

And so an hour passed, when the dying man had been for some time silent, but another kneeling figure had offered a prayer at the bedside. Then once more the old man began to mutter, at first in a low tone, then slowly and aloud—

"Cold, sir, cold—bitter cold for an old man like me—dreary streets, sir, and the lamps out—dark, dark—the dull courts and the foggy alleys—misery—beggary—starvation. Bright fields—light and darkness. No hypocrite, sir—humbly, with an angel's kiss upon my old lips—a seal—purity. Hark! Copy and proof—copy and proof—blurred and blotted—foul—foul—spelling—outs and doubles—corrections—too late—too late. Wages on Friday night, sir; wages, sir—wages of sin—wages—death—death—poor girl!—sleeping—found drowned—the Bible—Agnes Hardon—wages—wages—darker and darker—but no hypocrite, sir—with an angel's

kiss—an angel's—forgive—forgive—for ever and ever—and ev—"

Silence in the room, and the watchers stealing away.

Postage Stamps.

THERE are few things better known to us all, from the very highest to the lowest, than postage stamps; and the result of our familiarity with them is that we do not trouble ourselves to inquire where they all come from, how they are made, the processes they go through, and the numbers in which they are consumed. We see them around us at every hand's turn, and that contents us—at least, all who are not afflicted with a mass of correspondence which must be answered, to whom the penny stamp is a terror, and who would gladly incur the fine of having it sixpence to mitigate the dreaded visits of the postman. We mean to try and tell our readers how postage stamps are made, premising that the subject is a curious one, and not altogether without its interest to every one. To begin with, we may say that all the halfpenny, penny, threepenny, and twopenny stamps are printed by a private firm, whose extensive premises form nearly one side of Whitefriars-street, Fleet-street.

When the stamp was first resolved on, this firm employed for the purpose some ten or a dozen men, who turned out quite as much as was then wanted, and even that small staff was only employed intermittently. Now, nearly seventy hands are incessantly engaged, and they turn out 15,000 sheets a day of penny stamps for Somerset House, and £1,500 worth of sheets of halfpenny stamps—the use of which is fast increasing—in all, in round numbers, about 1,400,000,000 stamps a year. In stating this stupendous number, however, we quite put aside the fact that the same firm print most of the Irish, Scotch, and colonial bank-notes, and a portion of the notes for South America, some of which are perfect marvels of the most exquisite engraving, and the steel plates for which have cost large sums, but are so finely executed as to be almost incapable of perfect imitation. This branch, however, is what is called the general side of the large range of buildings, with which we have nothing now to do. It is of the Government side, where the postage stamps and the stamps for packs of cards are printed, and of which Excise officers are in charge, that we wish to speak on this occasion.

The paper for the penny stamp has a water-mark of a crown in the centre of the head, while the halfpenny sheets have the word halfpenny marked across them in what is called water, though it is really done by wires; and this word covers three small stamps, each having its portion, so that its genuineness if a fraud were attempted could be at once detected.

The paper is made at the mills at Rushmill, near Northampton, where there are excise officers also, who keep watch on its stores day and night, though, unlike the bank paper, this would really be of little value to any person who might chance to steal it, as we will show. The paper comes to Somerset House, and from thence it is issued to the firm. How often

the packages of 500 sheets each are counted before they reach the firm we cannot attempt to say, but we know that in their various stages they are counted seven times during their process of manufacture; but how many times they are again counted, checked, receipted, acknowledged, and recounted on their return to Somerset House, where the sheets have to be perforated, it would be very difficult to tell. Certainly, from the time the parcels leave the mills until the sheets are issued to the public, they cannot be counted and receipted for much less than twenty-five or thirty times.

Arrived at the printing office, and, of course, after the usual counting—which, once for all, we may say attends every one of the seven processes—the workmen have the paper given to them in batches of 400, 500, or 600 sheets, according to their skill and known rapidity of workmanship. The sheets are then put to soak between two thick layers of felt, and when thoroughly saturated the water is squeezed out of them under a powerful screw press until they are reduced to the requisite condition of dampness, like that of an early morning newspaper. From this room they are taken to the plates in the printing-room; and here we may say a word or two about how the plates are made. Over the original die is placed a roller of soft steel, and this, being forced upon the die by the enormous pressure of a compound lever, takes a complete *fac simile* as it is made to revolve with an ordinary handle. The impression thus got is made intensely hard by chilling the steel roller, and this in turn is rolled over the surface of the large soft steel plates, which again in turn are hardened, and from these the stamps are printed in sheets.

The process of printing is very simple, but from first to last it is all hand work. But before the plate goes to press an initial letter is stamped on each of the four corners of the stamp, and these vary in their combinations as much as the signals of vessels at sea, and no two are quite alike. Any of our readers can verify this if they choose, and they can also see, with the aid of a magnifying glass, on the right and left side, in the finest possible numerals, the number of the plate on which the sheet has been printed, and which perhaps not one in a million has ever observed. About fifteen years ago this mark led to the detection of a cruel murder in Ireland. A porter secreted himself in a little country bank till all were gone except the old cashier, whom he stunned so effectually that he never spoke again. He got but a few pounds for his crime, for the safe was closed, and he sat down and wrote a letter to himself in a feigned hand, making an appointment at that same time at a place some miles distant from the bank. Then, from the dead cashier's desk he cut, not tore, a postage stamp from a small sheet, and, leaving the bank, posted it. Suspicion, however, fell upon him, and he showed the letter to prove his *alibi*. But on comparing the number on the stamp with the number and letters of the sheet it was cut from, it was traced, like a bank note, till it was proved that the sheet had been sold to the cashier; and that postage stamp hanged the murderer. At that time, we believe, there were only two stars in the uppermost corners of the stamp,

and two letters at the bottom. Now each corner has a letter, the changes in which are varied in the most extraordinary manner.

The life of a plate for printing is only about two years. Of course there is the usual variation in their time of durability, which quite depends on the quality of the metal. There is an impression of one plate on the premises which has printed more than a million sheets, and was only changed because of a change in the mode of lettering. Its last print looks as bright and as clean cut as on the day it was first used. When the plates are worn out they have to be what is termed "killed." This is done by scoring them in all directions with a graver, so as to quite obliterate the head and letters. They are then subjected to the action of a powerful grindstone, and made as smooth as a mirror, and with proper preparation the metal is susceptible of a fresh impression.

The plates are not very thick, and therefore not very heavy, but the metal is expensive, and after having been tested by a two years' duty it is preferred to any other and newer material, though of course not as a rule. There is one Draconian rule, however, to which there is no exception made, and that is that none of the workmen are, under any excuse or pretence whatever, to allow or connive at any white paper being brought into the building. So stringently is this carried out, that a workman, and a good hand, was suspended for three days for bringing his lunch in white paper. There is no fault to find with this regulation. The white paper used for the stamps is in size and texture very like what is called "demy" in the trade, which can be got anywhere for 5d. a quire, though the stamp paper is much more costly. It is true that it would be a very risky business for any printer to try using this paper, and would require a confederate in the gummers' department; but, still, it could be done. True, the paper would have no water-mark; but who has ever yet heard of a person buying a penny stamp and stopping to investigate its water-mark? The fact that it has one at all will, we think, be new to most of our readers. Every sheet, too, has to go to Somerset House, where they undergo a sort of examination before they are perforated round their edges by the machines there; but it may be taken for granted that the persons who were careful and cunning enough to make sheets of fraudulent stamps would be equally careful not to let their work go gratis into the hands of the inspecting authorities.

But the workmen on these stamps are a very high class, and earn sometimes nearly £5 a week—almost always £4, with certain employment; and it is not among these that we need look for defaulters. As a matter of fact, there has not been one single instance of it since the penny postage stamp was first given to the public. But we have got to the end of a sufficiently long notice, and still have not touched on how the stamps are printed, how they are tinted, how gummed, how dried, and how many sheets are spoiled, and why. Nor have we done even more than allude to the bank-note printing, nor to the method of piercing the stamps at Somerset House. All these details, however, are far too full of interest

and of curious facts to be dismissed in a few lines, and we reserve our further detail of them. The profit on any stamps is not to be compared to the profit on the manufacture of the copper coinage, where there is a very real and most substantial gain; whereas with the stamp, whether penny or halfpenny, the Government undertake the cost of its delivery to the most remote district and almost unknown villages and hamlets throughout the United Kingdom.

AN EDITORIAL CHAIR.—An American editor writes:—"We have tried the Bogardus kicker, we have kept a kicking mule in our room, we've used bull-dogs and kept shot guns, and still people who have nothing else to do will come when we are busy, and insist on having us stop work and listen to them 'blow their horns' for an hour or two at a stretch. We have invented a chair which is a success. It is made of iron, screwed to the floor of our desk, and the seat is so arranged with steel springs that it 'lets go' every ten minutes after it is wound up. One winding will let her go three or four times, as it has the power of a three-year-old mule, no matter who sits on it. When it goes off it 'lifts' 'em, and flies back to its harmless position. It went through its first operation yesterday. A little chap, with side whiskers, from Cincinnati, came in to talk to us. He took his seat in 'our chair,' and commenced telling us about our 'flings' at the swill-house below his native city. We wrote away, while we knew 'things was working.' His ten minutes was up. Flip! the machine acted, and he was flung right through space—say fifteen yards of it—into a treacle mash-tub kept kindly at that distance to gently receive our visitors. He came out, ran down the street, but all the little boys were after him, and insisted upon 'licking' him, which we, in our mildness, and in another sense, had refrained from doing."

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXVI.—RASP'S ADVENTURE.



"ILL you swear now?" he whispered. "He is dying. Will you not save him?"

"I cannot, I cannot," she panted. "Oh, it is too horrible! Dutch, my love, it is for your sake. I swear."

"That you are mine?"

"Yes, yes," she whispered; and she swooned away, while Lauré removed his foot from the tube.

"Quick, my lads, with a will," shouted Rasp. "Haul! Run him up."

For the old diver had suddenly awakened to the fact that something was wrong below; and at his command the men holding the life-line ran forward along the deck, drawing Dutch rapidly to the surface, where half a dozen willing hands, the Cuban's among them, seized him and laid him on the deck, where Rasp rapidly unscrewed the helmet and exposed the young man's face—blue and distorted with strangulation.

"Quick! some more of these things off," exclaimed Mr. Meldon.

"You let him alone," growled Rasp. "I'll bring him to in a jiffy!" And, rudely elbowing the doctor aside, he seized Dutch's arms, pumped them up and down a few times, and then, forcibly pressing on his breast, produced a kind of artificial respiration; for at the end of a minute Dutch sighed, and then rapidly began to recover.

As he commenced breathing more regularly, those surrounding became aware that Hester was trying to get to his side, for, unnoticed in the excitement, she had recovered her senses, and then, pale and sick at heart, crept to the group, where she dreaded to look upon the form of him she loved lying dead.

A look of joy, succeeded by one of intense despair, crossed her face as she knelt down by Dutch's

head, waiting to see his eyes open, and to hear his words, as she shudderingly recalled the promise she had made to save his life.

She was so behind him that he did not see her when at last he opened his eyes, and gazed wildly about him, as if not comprehending where he was; and directly after he placed his hands to his face as if to feel the helmet.

His eyes opened more widely then, and Rasp held the cup of a brandy flask to his lips.

"Take a sup 'o this here, Mr. Pug," he said, in his rough way.

Dutch obeyed without a word, and his face began to resume its natural aspect.

"That was a near touch, Mr. Dutch, sir," growled the old fellow. "You would stop down too long."

"Too long!" said Dutch, faintly, as he tried to sit up.

"No, no—be still for a few minutes," said the doctor, who had been pushing up the india-rubber bands of his sleeve, and feeling the sufferer's pulse, to Rasp's great disgust.

"Who said I stopped down too long?" said Dutch, angrily, but in rather a feeble way. "The supply of air was stopped."

"What!" cried Rasp, fiercely.

"I say the wind was stopped."

"Hark at him!" cried Rasp, looking round from one to the other. "Hark at that, Mister Parkley, and you too, captain. Why, I sooperintended it all myself, and the supply never stopped for a moment."

Hester shuddered.

"Here, he goes and overdoes it, gets fightin' sharks, and stopping down about twice as long as he should the first time, and then says the pumping was checked."

"You must have got the tube kinked," said Dutch, sitting up. "Take off these weights."

"You must, you mean," said Rasp, unhooking the leaden pads from breast to back; and while he was so engaged Hester looked wildly round in a desperate resolve to tell all, but her eyes dropped directly, as she shuddered; for just at her husband's feet stood Lauré, and she felt that she dare not tell the secret that seemed to be driving her mad.

"Here you goes right under the schooner, and must have hitched the chube in the ladder; that's what you must have done."

"There, it's of no use to argue with you, Rasp," said Dutch. "I'm all right again now, thank you, doctor; but I'm sure of one thing—the supply of air was stopped somehow, and I've had a bit of a shaking."

"And I'm sure it just wasn't," growled Rasp. "Everything went just as it should go. There!"

Dutch rose without assistance, and as he did so,

Hester, with a sigh of relief, shrank away, feeling that she could never look upon his face again.

"But I have saved his life," she sighed to herself. "I have saved his life!" And then, shuddering with horror, and asking herself whether the time had not come when she had better die, she crept slowly to the cabin stairs, descended, and sinking into her chair by her cot, sat there and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Dutch smiled with pleasure as he stood up and found that he could take a few steps here and there without feeling his brain reel; for Oakum took off his old straw hat, waved it round his head, and the men gave a hearty cheer.

"It weer too bad o' you though to stop his wind, Rasp, owd mate," growled Oakum, in the old diver's ear.

Rasp looked daggers at him, and then proceeded to wipe and polish the helmet, from which he had been removing some grains of sand.

"Have a cigar, Mr. Pugh," said Wilson, holding out his case, and then shaking hands—an example followed by Mr. Parkley, the captain, and John Studwick, who stood looking at him with admiration.

"I have done nothing but shake your hands for the last ten minutes, Mr. Pugh," said the doctor, warmly, "but we may as well shake hands again; though really our old friend Rasp here, with his rough and ready means, was principal attendant."

"Humph!" growled Rasp, "I do get the credit for that, then. Stopped the wind, indeed! Here, you nigger, just leave that pump alone."

This last to Pollo, who was curiously inspecting the machine, and who strutted off with his opal eyes rolling, and his teeth grinning indignation at being called a nigger.

"Well, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley, who so far had been able to restrain his impatience, but who longed to hear the result of the investigation, "I must congratulate you on your brave encounter with the shark."

"And wanted me to haul you up," growled Rasp. "There was not much bravery in it," said Dutch, who was now smoking as composedly as if nothing had occurred, while the water that had steamed from his india-rubber suit was fast drying on the sunbaked deck. "I was well armed—my enemy was not."

"Wasn't he?" growled Rasp, giving a vicious rub at the helmet. "What do you call them teeth? But, then, we divers are not skeered about a shark or two."

"Do you feel enough to talk about your descent, Pugh?" said Mr. Parkley.

"I feel well enough to go down again," said Dutch, smiling; "but this time I must have a sharp-pointed iron rod to probe the sand."

"I'm a-going down next," said Rasp. "It's my turn."

"But what is your opinion? What have you made out?" said Mr. Parkley.

"Almost nothing," replied Dutch. "If there is anything below there, it is buried deep in sand, which, I think, we must blast away, for it runs back as fast as it is dug."

"Then you found absolutely nothing?" said Mr. Parkley, while the others waited eagerly for the young man's answer.

"Unless this proves to be something," replied Dutch, taking the shelly mass from his net basket, and handing it to his partner.

Mr. Parkley received it with trembling hands.

"It is heavy," he said, turning it over and over. "Here, Rasp, a hammer—quick!"

The old fellow handed a bright steel-headed tool, with the ordinary hammer head on one side, but a sharp wedge-shaped edge at the other, and with this Mr. Parkley chipped away the small barnacles and other shells conglomerated together, and at about the fourth stroke laid bare something bright and shining.

"My dear Dutch," cried his partner, dropping the hammer, "we are right. Look—silver!"

He wrung Dutch's hand vigorously, as the young man's face flushed with pleasure; and then, picking up the hammer, he struck off the remainder of the shelly concretion, and passed round a blackened, wedge-shaped ingot of about a couple of pounds weight, and undoubtedly of fine silver.

"Here, lay hold of the ends of this soot," cried Rasp, eagerly, as he seized the second suit, which lay ready on a seat. "I'm a-going down dreckly."

"We'd better wait first, and make some definite plan of action," said Mr. Parkley, who was nearly as excited as his old assistant.

"No, we hadn't," said Rasp, shuffling into the india-rubber garments. "Only just have that there ladder shifted over to port. You can make your plans while I go down t'other side, and feels about with the iron rod. You two's administrative; I'm zeketive. I sha'n't be happy unless I has a go in."

The point was yielded, the ladder shifted over to the other side, and in a few minutes Rasp had taken the keen knife and stuck it in his belt, thrown down a long iron rod, and declared himself ready.

"I shall set to work where you left that there spade," he said. "You'll see as the wind aint stopped, Mr. Parkley, sir."

"Of course," was the reply.

"And you'll see as the chube aint in no kinks, Mr. Pug," he continued, with a dry, chuckling laugh, "and so will I."

"You may laugh, Rasp," said Dutch, good humouredly; "but you will not alter my opinion about it at all."

"I know that, Mr. Pug—I know that," he chuckled.

"But you haven't got the life-line attached."

"Yah! I don't want no life-lines," said the old fellow. "I've been down too many times."

"You don't go down without, Rasp," said Mr. Parkley, authoritatively.

"And why not?" said the stubborn old fellow.

"Because if you like to throw your life away, I don't choose to spare you at such a time."

The old fellow assumed his helmet, growling and grumbling the whole time; and then, all being ready, the look-out was arranged once more for sharks, Mr. Parkley held a cartridge or two ready, and Dutch took the management of the descent, watchfully minding that the tube and lines were clear; and

Rasp went down, to be seen directly after thrusting down the rod here and there, and soon after commencing digging in the slow, laborious way inevitable in so dense a medium.

The water was disturbed by the continuous fountain of exhausted air bubbles that rose rapidly to the surface; but all the same, Rasp's motions could be pretty well followed, and they were scanned with great eagerness by all on deck, when suddenly the cry of sharks was raised, and the black fins of a couple of monsters were seen slowly coming up astern.

In an instant Mr. Parkley ran aft, and after seeing that his wire coil would be perfectly free, he threw the cartridge with such precision that it fell between the two fish, and on the wire being applied to the battery there was a dull report, a heavy column of water flew up, in which could be seen the forms of the sharks, and as the commotion subsided they were seen swimming feebly, in a stunned, helpless manner, round and round, and gradually getting more distant from the schooner.

The men gave a cheer at the result; but as they did so, Mr. Wilson raised the cry again of "Shark!" and pointed downwards, where a monster was seen slowly approaching Rasp, who was working away in profound ignorance of his danger, though he had been seen to straighten himself up for a moment or two when the cartridges were exploded.

"Stand ready with the life-line," shouted Dutch. "Keep on pumping, my lads."

As he spoke he signalled with the cord, and Rasp faced round, to be seen to squat down directly as he drew his knife.

The scene below was very vivid, for the sun shone out so brightly that even the rivets in the copper helmet were visible, and, but for a word or two of warning, those whose duty it was to attend to life-line and pump would have stopped short, to try and catch a glance at what was going on below.

Dutch's stern voice brought them back to their duty, and the pump clanked, and those who held the life-line stood ready for a run forward, to drag Rasp up if there was any need.

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, eagerly, "he is not ready for the monster, and it is sailing round him. I dare not send down a cartridge, as the brute will not be the only sufferer. Look, look, for heaven's sake, Dutch! It has seized him."

Plainly enough to be seen, as Mr. Parkley spoke, the shark gave its tail a wave, turned over so that its white breast was like a flash of light in the water, and, opening its large jaws, it seemed to seize the diver.

At the same moment there was a tug at the signal-cord, and a sharp tug at the life-line; for Dutch gave the word, and Rasp was dragged rapidly to the surface, the shark following, and making a fresh snap at him as he was hoisted on deck.

The second snap divided the tube, which the monster caught across his jaws, but no sooner was Rasp in safety than Mr. Parkley threw one of his cartridges at the shark, where it swam now round and round, with only its back fin above the water.

In an instant the creature turned on one side, and the white cartridge was seen to disappear. Then

followed a touch of the wire against the hissing battery, there was a deafening report, and the schooner heaved a little over on one side, and the surface of the placid sea was covered with blood-stained fragments, which were seized and borne off by a shoal of silvery-looking fish, which seemed attracted to the spot in thousands.

"What did you pull me up for?" roared Rasp, as soon as he was relieved of his helmet.

"To save your life," was the reply.

"It's shabby, that's what it is," said Rasp, angrily. "No one interfered with you, Mr. Dutch, when you had your turn."

"But you signalled to be pulled up."

"That I didn't," growled the old fellow. "It was that brute bit at my helmet. Has he made any marks?"

"Yes," said Mr. Parkley, lifting up the bright copper head-piece, and examining the couple of curves of sharply defined scratches which had been made by the monster's teeth.

"Then you should have left me alone," growled Rasp. "I should have killed that chap if I could have got my knife out of the sheath."

"And could you not?" said Dutch.

"No. It's a sticking fast in the sheath there, and— Who's took it out?" he growled, feeling his side. "Why, I must ha' dropped it."

The bright blade could be seen lying below, and Rasp stood grumbling and wondering how it could have happened, ending with whispering with Dutch.

"I aint afeard on the beggars, but don't let out, as I was took aback. I worn't ready, you know—that's how it was."

Dutch nodded assent, and the subject dropped; for Rasp pulled a couple of large and two small lumps of shelly matter from his pocket, the weight of which instantly told Mr. Parkley that they were ingots in the same condition as the first.

There was no doubt now about the treasure having been found, and the question discussed was whether it would be better to try and get rid of the sand by blasting, or try the slower and more laborious plan of digging it away.

This last was decided on, especially as by blasting away the sand the silver ingots, to a great extent, might be cast away with the covering. Besides which, the position of the schooner was so satisfactory that the captain was averse to its being moved, and wished, if possible, to retain it where it was. Tackle was rigged up, then, with iron buckets attached to ropes, and the afternoon was spent by Dutch and Rasp in turn in filling the buckets, which were then drawn up by the sailors, and emptied beyond the ribs of the old galleon.

The filling of the buckets resulted in the discovery of many ingots, which were placed aside; and at last, after several descents, a portion of the treasure was reached, and, instead of sending up sand, the buckets were filled with silver and the rough shelly concrete, though every ingot, as they worked lower, was more free from the adhesion, till the lower ones were almost literally blackened silver covered with sand.

Worn out with fatigue, the task was at last set aside for the day, and, in honour of their great

success, Pollo's best endeavours had been called into question to prepare what was quite a banquet, during which Mr. Parkley was congratulated by his friends in turn, and afterwards, when seated, in the comparative cool of the evening, the question was discussed as to there being any risk attending their proceedings.

"I don't suppose we are right from some points of view," said Mr. Parkley, gaily. "But let's secure all the treasure, and we'll talk about that afterwards. We shall give you a rich cargo, Studwick."

"I hope so," was the reply; "but you'll have to go on for many days at this rate before I am overloaded."

"Wait a bit—eh, Dutch Pugh? I think we shall astonish him yet. Come, a glass of champagne, man. You are low, with your accident. What are you dreaming about?"

"I was wondering," said Dutch, quietly, "whether you ought not to take more precautions."

"What about? Indians ashore?"

"No; sailors afloat."

"Quite right," said the captain.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Dutch, "that we must not excite the cupidity of these men by letting them see too much of the treasure, or mischief may follow. There are several fellows here whose looks I don't like."

"Don't invent bugbears, Pugh," said Mr. Parkley, gaily. "We can take care of what we find, for we have plenty of arms; and I doubt very much whether the men would risk their necks by entering into anything in the shape of a mutiny. What do you say to that, eh, Studwick? Am I not right?"

"I don't know what to say," replied the captain. "I must confess now that I had my misgivings about some of the men at the commencement of the voyage; and though I have nothing to make me suspicious, the fact of having a large freight of silver on board with such a crew as we have does not tend to make me feel quite at ease."

"But you have not your large freight of silver on board yet," said the doctor, smiling.

"No, by Jove," exclaimed Mr. Studwick; "but if they go on piling up the ingots at the rate they have been this afternoon, we shall soon have a temptation strong enough to incite a set of scoundrels to cut all our throats."

Dutch started and shuddered.

"Come, come, gentlemen," cried Mr. Parkley, "suppose we stop all this dismal quaking. Here we have so far succeeded in our quest, and the trip bids fair to be all that can be desired, whereupon you set to inventing troubles. Come, I'll give you a toast. Here's 'Home, sweet home!'"

"Home, sweet home!" said the others in chorus, as they drained their glasses, saving Dutch, who sat moodily thinking. For these words had recalled happy days that were past. There was no happy home for him; and it seemed as if a wandering life would be the happiest that he could now look forward to in the future.

At last, being weary of their exertions, the watch was set, and they went below, the doctor sternly forbidding any one from lying down to sleep on the deck, a most tempting place in the heat; and no

sooner had the captain taken a look round than a couple of dark figures crept stealthily from under the tarpaulin that covered a boat, and were joined by another, who cautiously came forward to join them from the fore-castle hatch, the three getting together under the dark shelter of the bulwarks, where earnest conversation was carried on in a whisper.

About half an hour later another dark figure crept out upon the deck, and stood listening for a few moments, before going down on hands and knees, and then apparently flat on the deck, to worm its way towards where a faint light shone up from the cabin, and gaze cautiously down through the skylight as far as it could for the wire protection spread over the glass.

Apparently satisfied, the figure crept forward again, and made for the hatch leading down to the berths occupied by Mr. Jones, the doctor, the naturalist, Rasp, and where Sam Oakum also turned in.

Now, it so happened that the latter gentleman was enjoying a strange nightmare, in which it seemed to him that Rasp had, out of spite, forced him into one of the diving suits, made him go to the bottom of the sea, and had then suddenly cut off the supply of air. He fought, he struggled, he grunted, he made every effort he could to breathe, but all in vain; and in the horror of the suffocating sensation he awoke, to find that a band was pressed heavily upon his mouth, while another seemed busy at his breast.

CHAPTER XXVII.—POLLO'S REPORT.

OAKUM was not a man to shout for help, but to act, and act he did on the instant, by turning sharply round, and seizing his assailant by the throat. He lowered his hands, though, in a moment, for a thick voice whispered—

"Don't make 'tupid bobbery, Mass' Sam Oakum, sah, or you wake de oder gentlemen."

"What's up, Pollo?" said Oakum, in the same low tone; for he was awake now to the fact that something was wrong. "Ingins?"

"No, sah, I tink not; but you come out here, sah, where de oder gentlemen not hear, and I tell you."

Oakum squabbled with Pollo every day, but they were very old shipmates, and the rough sailor had the most abundant confidence in the black; so he drew on his trousers, and cautiously followed him to the foot of the steps, where Pollo sat down, and Oakum knelt by his side.

"Now, then, what's up?" growled Oakum.

"I tell you, sah, reckly; but first must 'fess somefin to you."

"Go ahead, then, my hearty," was the reply.

"Well, sah, while I busy all de mornin' in my galley, I see de beauful lump of silber brought up ober and ober again, and I see Mass' Jone and noder sailor busy knock off de shell and tuff, and frow him all of a heap."

"Yes, and there it lies now on deck," said Sam, "instead of being shied overboard. What o' that?"

"Well, sah, no able to sleep 'cause of dat; and so

I get out of my hammock and creep all soft like on deck."

"What, did you get some of the bits o' shell in your blanket?"

"No, sah, no," chuckled Pollo. "You know me, Mass' Sam Oakum, sah—we berry ole friend, and go froo deal ob trouble togedder."

"Well, yes, Pollo, old man, we have had a hardship or two; but what o' that?"

"Why, sah, I fess everything to you, sah, and tell you all."

"Heave ahead, then."

"Well, sah, I no tink it berry wrong, sah, 'cause there such a debble ob a lot ob silber; but while I watch Mass' Jone and de sailor chip, chip, chip at de shell to knock 'em off, I see dem knock little bit ob silber too some time, and one time dey fro lump of shell down. I quite sure got big piece silber inside."

"And you've been up on deck to get hold of it, eh?"

"Yes, Mass' Oakum, sah, dat's him."

"Hand over, and let's feel the weight on it, Pollo, old man; only you needn't do that, my lad. We found the spot for the govners, and they'll come down handsome."

"Yes, Mass' Oakum, sah; but I think it great pity waste anyting, even bit ob fat; so no like see bit ob silber fro overboard."

"Where's the stuff, Pollo?"

"I no got um, sah, dat's why I came to ask you."

"But is it so heavy as all that, Pollo?"

"No, sah, you no understand. I came on deck find de silber, and I find someting else."

"What's that?" said Oakum, sleepily.

"I find piece ob de crew, sah, all sit togedder in a corner, hatchin' mutiny."

"What?" exclaimed Oakum, whom these words galvanized into a waking state.

"Hatch de mutiny, sah."

"I've good as expected as much," exclaimed Oakum, giving his leg a slap. "Heave out, and let's rouse the skipper. The beggars mean treachery."

"We better go softly then, Mass' Oakum, sah, or we get knife in de ribs."

"Right, Pollo," said Oakum, "let's investigate first and see."

Creeping softly up the ladder, he just raised his head above the combings of the hatchway, and peered cautiously round, but seeing nothing, he drew himself the whole way out, and lay down on deck, Pollo following him on the instant.

"Well," whispered Oakum, "what's their bearings?"

Pollo, for answer, crawled away into the darkness, and returned at the end of a couple of minutes, to announce that they were all gone.

"Look here, Master Pollo," growled Oakum, in a whisper, "if you've woke me out of a fine sleep to humbug me, you and I will have a row."

"I quite suah, sah, dat free sailor fellow set under de deck, sah, hatch mutiny."

"Come and have a look round," said the old fellow; and together they went softly to the man who had the watch forward, to find that he had heard nothing, though a sharper investigator than

Oakum would have come to the conclusion that the fellow had been fast asleep.

A similar result followed the journey aft, when, with a growl, Oakum walked straight back to the hatchway, where he turned round.

"Lookye here, Pollo, old man, you get to your hammock and have a good night's rest, or you'll be rolling into the fire fast asleep to-morrow, and burning those beautiful curls of yourn. And lookye here, too, my lad, you leave that there silver rubbish alone, and trust to what the skipper and the govners give you for reward. Good night."

"Dah!" cried Pollo, sulkily, "I don't care who come and take de ship now. I no say word about more. Only get laugh at." And muttering volubly to himself, he crept back to his hammock, and the next minute he was lying fast asleep with his mouth open.

The morning broke bright and beautiful, with the golden sunshine glinting through the tall columns of the palm trees ashore, and lighting up the dark vistas of the jungle in the most wonderful manner; but the thoughts of all on board were directed not to the golden sunshine, save that it was available for the manner in which it lit up the depths of the clear sea; and all that day, in steady turns, Dutch, Mr. Parkley, and Rasp went down, working away clearing out the sand, and sending up the iron buckets laden with silver.

Careful probing with the iron rod had shown them that the space in which the treasure lay was not great, only spread over a portion of the lower part of the old galleon of about twelve feet by sixteen; everywhere else the rod would penetrate to any depth, save where it came in contact with the old hardened ribs of the ship, or portions of its keel, and they gave forth to the touch such unmistakable signs of what the opposing material was, that the adventurers were quite content.

A receptacle had been prepared for the treasure in the hold, and the way to this was down the cabin stairs, strong bulkheads cutting this off from the other portions of the vessel; and down here continuously, after the shelly concretions, where they existed, had been knocked off, was carried bucket after bucket of ingots, which Mr. Jones and Oakum stacked as regularly as they would lie, while the captain superintended and kept watch on deck.

The men worked admirably: their wonder at the richness of the find passing away as the silver became common in their sight, for it was shot out of the buckets on to the deck, hammered even, and thrown about as if it was so much stone.

There were two or three alarms of sharks; but an occasional cartridge fired under water at a distance from the ship had the desired effect of scaring the monsters away.

Rasp worked even harder than Dutch, giving as his reason that they ought to make hay while the sun shone; and certainly he made a goodly addition to the silver stack, while Mr. Parkley was not far behind Dutch. The doctor, Mr. Wilson, and even John Studwick helped, by cleaning the ingots as they were raised by the sailors in the buckets, and emptied out on deck, while Bessy Studwick, Hester, and Pollo helped by being always ready with refresh-

ments as they were needed, and helped besides to look out.

For it was determined to make the best use they could of the daylight, and consequently their meals were snatched in the little intervals of work. Even the men forbore to grumble at being kept without their regular meals, for there was a novelty in their task.

The sand caused a great deal of trouble to the divers, but this was steadily mastered, and when at sunset the task was set aside for the night, and, wearied out, the adventurers sat down to the repast Pollo had prepared and the steward set out, the question was asked in a whisper, what was the value of the treasure recovered, Mr. Parkley, who had been below, could only say—

"Many thousands."

(*To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.*)

Planting for Health.

AMONG the ornaments of our gardens and plantations there is scarcely one more splendid in its way than the slow-growing *Wellingtonia* of New Zealand; and America has supplied cypresses and other conifers whose variety and grace are well known, not only in the grounds around wealthy mansions and in great public or national nurseries, but in the gardens of suburban villas and country parsonages. We have no flowering shrub comparable to our rhododendrons from the sub-tropical snow-crowned heights of the Himalayas. Many a plant native to a warm climate will endure a much colder one, especially if the native conditions of moisture, often more essential than those of temperature, are carefully observed.

Some of our most valued and most common productions are not natives of England; the potato, for example, so long the principal food and dependence of the Irish peasant and his pig, was first seen in England during the reign of Elizabeth. Indeed, the potato is so much more extensively and successfully grown on this side of the Atlantic than in its native land, that in the States the common potato is distinguished as Irish, while the potato proper, or American, means the sweet variety, by no means generally agreeable to English or Irish palates.

There are, perhaps, exceptional reasons why we might expect frequent failures in the attempt to naturalize Australian growths. The great insular continent of the Pacific is unlike any other part of the world, and especially unlike Europe. It belongs in every respect to a different geological age. It has no native beast above the character of the marsupial, the first mammal, or perhaps we should more properly say the predecessor of the true mammalia, in the course of geological succession or development. In short, whereas Britain, and probably nearly the whole of Europe, has been submerged several times, and has received deposit after deposit of new kinds of rock, each containing the remains of a new animal and vegetable creation since that period, Australia is what Britain was before a true mammalian—a quadruped of that sub-kingdom to which alone the word animal or beast is applied in common talk—first made its appearance upon earth.

Her surface, her fauna, her flora, recal us to a past era of the world's existence, and it might well have proved that, though the distance from the equator might be the same, not a single creature belonging to that epoch could be assimilated to the conditions of our own.

This, however, is not the case. There are in Australia native birds, insects, and plants, distinguishable from those of Europe chiefly or solely by colour. The *oxalis*, the characteristic floweret of the plains, but for the brown hue of its leaves and the yellow colour of its flowers, resembles it so closely that only a botanist could otherwise distinguish the exquisite little wood-sorrel familiar to every lover of English wild flowers. Henry Kingsley tells us, in one of his most interesting novels, that the Australian blue-bottle, to an unscientific eye and ear, resembles the English fly of that name in everything save that it is brown. The Australian swan realizes what seemed, in ages when Australia was unheard of, the very ideal of incredibility—the black swan being to Latin writers what a white crow was to the makers of English proverbs.

The objection, then, to the utilization of the *Eucalyptus globulosa* as a natural agent in draining English marshes, depends simply upon climate. The tribe to which it belongs is naturally tropical or sub-tropical; and this particular variety is one of its least hardy forms. We have heard, indeed, on what should be good authority, that the *Eucalyptus* thrives on Tasmanian mountains at a height which brings it within the conditions of an English winter; but we know that more than mere average temperature has to be taken into account. The vine grows, for example, in countries with far colder winters than England is accustomed to endure; yet we can make no wine comparable to that of the Rhine, because we have no summer that will ripen the wine-making grape in the open air. There are other plants that can ripen well in our summer that cannot endure the extreme cold of our winter; and again, there are plants, like the *Auricula*, which can bear every variety of English weather except the wetness of our autumn. So far it would appear that the *Eucalyptus globulosa* does not flourish even in Devonshire, and, if so, it can hardly be expected to prosper in the sites for which it is especially recommended.

Fortunately, we have native shrubs and trees which, if not so peculiarly suited to the purpose of absorbing the superfluous moisture, and correcting the pernicious exhalations of marshy soil, will yet thrive there and do their work fairly well. The willow not only become a source of profit in our dampest soils, but produces a corrective or remedy against malaria and ague similar, though decidedly inferior, to quinine, the bark of the Peruvian *chin-chona*. Some native and many naturalized *conifera* thrive excellently under similar conditions. The Scotch fir, one of our hardiest native trees, is proof not only against the cold and exposure of Westmoreland fells, and of the lower heights of the Scotch Highlands, but prospers at the brink of dykes, pools, and streams.

The *conifera* of nearly all kinds, and especially the fir, are adapted by nature expressly to remedy

the evil tendencies of the situations in which they thrive. As in the Carolinas, the pine barrens are the health resort and sleeping place of those who cultivate the lower and more fertile soils, but dare not sleep there till after the first frost, for fear of the terrible country fever; so a grove of the common fir or other turpentine-producing trees gives out exhalations known by experience, and affirmed by recent scientific discovery, to afford the best possible preservative against disease of the malarial type. In fact, some writers apparently incline to believe that a pine wood might prove quite as healthy a resort as the best of mineral springs.

The Scotch fir planted in rows for some hundred yards round the edges of a pestiferous marsh might do not a little to intercept the unwholesome exhalations, and protect the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, while the willow, swiftly growing as it is, would gradually absorb the superfluous moisture, and prepare the ground for an advance of the *conifera*. No one who has noticed the character of the ground immediately under a group of Scotch firs can have failed to observe how the fall of their peculiar sharp needles differs from that of ordinary deciduous leaves, producing not a rich moist leaf-mould, specially nutritious to grass and flowers, but a mass of loose, dry, hard fragments, through which even the exhalations of a moist soil would hardly penetrate.

An Elephant Hunt.

THE night before the Duke's arrival, I walked round the line of watchers, a distance of three miles. The Singalese watchers were standing or sitting by the side of the wood fires, which they kept burning brightly. Some were watching with sticks or rude guns in their hands, others were sleeping; while even at this time of night a few were cooking their food. The whole presented a strange sight, and as the ruddy light shone through the trees, and I heard the crash of the elephants through the jungle, I was conscious of a thrill of excitement, which was not lessened when the report of guns on the other side showed that the elephants were by no means inactive. The guns were, of course, all loaded with blank cartridge, being used merely to frighten the herd.

About an hour after the Duke's arrival, the attempts to drive the herd into the enclosure, which was only a quarter of a mile distant, commenced; but the elephants, although short of water, declined for some hours to be caught in the trap. The ground was, unfortunately, level, so that those who followed the elephants closely could see them, and the Duke and others who were on the grand stand saw nothing of the elephants until shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon, when the loud cheers of the beaters and others surrounding the enclosure proclaimed the fact that the herd had walked in, and that the gate had been shut behind. The tame ones, standing inside the outer gateway, and acting as decoys, were quickly taken within the kraal, and commenced pulling up the trees in front of the stand, so as to clear a space for the operation of noosing. The sagacious animals, in the most docile manner, answered to the word of

their mahout, and pulled up many a tree with their trunks, or, if the tree was too tough for its strength, pushed its immense forehead against it till it snapped and fell.

Having cleared the requisite ground, four huge tame elephants walked round the kraal, and drove the wild herd, through the pond in the centre, to a place in front of the grand stand. There was no attempt at resistance on the part of the wild animals, twenty-one of whom were kraaled, but slowly they tumbled up the bank, unmercifully squeezing the smaller ones of their number, who were unable to take care of themselves. Occasionally, as the mahout dug his goad into them, or as one of the tame ones butted at them, they would utter a cry of rage or despair; but they seemed too stupefied to make any attempt to escape from the kraal, and only endeavoured to get away from the tame elephants into the pool.

The work of noosing the wild elephants commenced, several tame animals being employed in this rather ticklish operation. At first the ropes employed were too weak, and as the huge animals leaped forward directly they found their legs caught they gave way. Nor were the proceedings rendered more interesting by a quarrel between some of the noosers. At last these difficulties were got over, and the work commenced in earnest, the first animal being caught in front of the stand, and there tied up. It was a young she elephant, with several shot wounds in her body, and the exertions she made to get away were of the most frantic character. Mootooraemy, a fine tusker, stood by her side, and every time she attempted to free herself he dug his tusks into her side till she roared with pain. It took nearly half an hour to tie her up. The noose by which the elephant is originally caught is slipped over one of the hind legs by the nooser, who creeps underneath a tame elephant, which meanwhile guards him from harm. Directly he gets the noose tightened he hands the end of the rope to the mahout of the tame elephant, upon the back of which he at once climbs, in order to be out of the reach of the animal which is caught. The tame elephant then walks towards a tree, pulling the struggling animal after him, while the other tame ones go behind the captive and push him on, to prevent him from straining the rope too much. The other end is wound round a tree, close to which the tame animals drive the other, and then the natives, getting underneath the legs of those they know they can trust, twine other ropes round the legs of their captive, and fasten him tightly to the tree until he is safely secured. These operations generally last for half an hour, and during their continuance the tied-up brute utters the most despairing trumpetings, as if appealing to his herd to come and help him.

In the early part of the afternoon some of the smaller animals were caught, one of which was to be presented to the Duke, who, however, might possibly have some hesitation in accepting the gift. He accepted one at Ratnapura the other day, and had it brought down to Colombo, but it has since got into disgrace, as it broke loose while tied up in the grounds of Government House, and pulled up a large number of fruit trees. This is almost as bad

as the young one that Sir Emerson Tennent trained, and trained so well that in the absence of the family one day it entered the dining-room, and, with a sweep of the trunk, cleared the sideboard of all the glass upon it.

The young elephants when captured proved very troublesome customers. They attacked the tame elephants in a most decided manner, and snapped at every native who came within sight; but they could not avoid their fate. Tired of throwing their whole weight on the cords which bound them tightly to a tree, they threw themselves upon the ground, rolling on their sides, and uttering the most pitiable cries. At times they would jump up quickly, and commence tearing the scrub or small jungle to pieces. Five were caught, and then the proceedings of the day were over—these young animals being, however, first taken out of the kraal in order to prevent any interference with the morrow's sport. They had ropes tied round their necks, and these were fastened to the tame animals, who dragged their small but unruly charges to trees about half a mile distant. There they remained all the night—indeed, as long as I was at the kraal; and for several hours their bellows could be heard in all parts of the camp.

On the following day the labour of capturing the elephants recommenced, several animals being speedily captured. The principal of the herd caused Ranghamy, the chief nooser, a great deal of trouble; he not only showed skill in avoiding the man's tactics, but three times his great strength enabled him to break the ropes. The fourth time the man succeeded, with the united efforts of several tame elephants, in getting the huge beast securely fastened to a tree, and he was at once named "The Duke," amid much applause.

A London Legend.

CHAPTER LII.—"MY SOLICITORS, SIR!"

IT never rains but it pours, and the storm fell heavily now upon the head of Doctor Hardon of Somesham. Through the instrumentality of Mr. Sterne he was served with the requisite legal notices, which seemed to be of the nature of seeds calling up a variety of legal plants, which coiled, and twined, and curled round the doctor, threatening to strangle him with their powerful tendrils; for he was deeply involved in numerous speculative matters, and the fact of his being legally summoned to give up his brother's estate, now reduced to quite one-half—for he had disposed of all that he could—roused the aggressiveness of the law—a law which seemed omniscient as regarded failing men's affairs; and a few days after, from information he had received, as the policemen say, Septimus Hardon learned that his uncle was in Cursitor-street.

"I would go and see him," said Mr. Sterne. "He may feel disposed to give up all quietly; and I presume that you would take no steps to enforce restitution of what he has sold during his occupation of your rights?"

"No, no—no, no!" exclaimed Septimus. "He is a ruined man."

Septimus Hardon shuddered as he turned into Cursitor-street—dirty, cheerless, sponging-housey Cursitor-street of those days, with its legal twang and the iron-barred windows of the sheriffs' houses. There was no difficulty in finding the residence of Mr. Barjonas, for the brass-plate was on the door, though from its colour it was only by supposition that the plate was termed brass. The windows were coated with a preservative paste of dirt, while the same composition entered strongly into all the domestic arrangements. In front, the pavement was marked all over with cabalistic signs; over which hopped and danced dirty children—young clients, perhaps—in company with pieces of broken plate, there called "chaney;" the road was decorated with parsnip-cuttings and potato-peelings, after the mode adopted in Bennett's-rents; while sundry indications pointed to the fact that coffee was much in favour, for the grounds found a resting-place in the gutter. A bashaw-like cock was scratching over some scraps of parchment and sawdust-sweepings, but they seemed dry, so he refrained from calling up the ladies of his harem—two—both of whom were of the breed known as "five-toed Dorkings," and in duty bound to be white, but they were of a peculiar tint, like mouldy robes.

Septimus Hardon walked up to a thick-lipped gentleman upon the doorstep, and, as he seemed disposed to bar the way, told him of his business.

"Show this gedt idto dudber seved," said the officer; for such he was, though only holding commission from the sheriff.

A fluey-headed boy, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up to his shoulders to display two very thin arms, at the end of one of which he carried a black waiter, came forward, performing a sort of shaving operation with the edge of the said waiter on his smooth chin, and beckoning to the visitor, ushered him into the room known as number seven, where Septimus stood in presence of his uncle, and gazed with wonder at the change. For the doctor's clothes were growing looser upon him hour by hour, and his cheeks hung flabby and in folds above his dirty white neckcloth.

But more than at this Septimus Hardon gazed at his uncle's strange lost aspect, as he stood with his gold pencil-case in one hand and a letter in the other—a letter which he had read over again and again, and then paused to wipe his forehead with his hand. But it was only a letter of upbraiding from his wife, enclosing to him a small scrap which the wretched woman had clipped from a newspaper—a paper weeks old, but which Fate had ordered should be sent to her; while now she asked her ruined lord who was the woman taken from the river, the woman who had nursed Eleanor Anderson, and had asked their help and forgiveness at that very time. Upbraidings, words almost of rage, she had sent him in that letter, telling him of his obstinacy, and reminding him of the times she had implored his forgiveness. And now these words had come at an hour when he could bear no more. He had read letter and paragraph in a dreamy, misty way, thinking of his losses—of his wrongs to his nephew; while now the man himself stood before him, perhaps to add to his revilings. Worn out with anxiety and sleepless-

ness, faint with hunger and weary calculations of his affairs, the doctor strove for an instant to regain command of himself; then stared piteously at his visitor for an instant, staggered, grasped at his neckcloth, and fell heavily upon the floor.

Time passed; and as soon as the proper legal arrangements were completed, Septimus Hardon was to be possessed of his father's much reduced property—an estate shorn of its extent, but still what, to a poor man, seemed wealth. In obedience to his wishes, the affairs had been arranged in the quietest manner, Septimus Hardon's not being a nature to trample upon a fallen man—fallen indeed; for his next visit to his uncle was at one of the debtors' prisons, from which there seemed no likelihood of his release, so deeply was he involved.

Mrs. Doctor Hardon had been to Essex-street the night before, begging that he would come, for the poor woman was in despair and dread at the turn matters were taking; for there the doctor sat, as he had sat the night through in his shabbily-furnished room, sitting with a heavy frown upon his forehead, wrinkled as though the spirit of evil pressed down upon him heavily. Three times over he had sternly bade the weeping woman begone—the wife of many years—who, her fit of bitter anger passed, now hung about the gate of a morning until they were opened, and would then have laid her grey head upon his shoulder as she whispered comfort. But no; her lot was to pace wearily up and down; and the doctor sat alone, hour after hour, brooding over his fall; the proofs brought forward that his was a fraud; the curse that had seemed to attend the money; the failure of venture after venture that he had looked upon as certainties; the gnawing agony of his heart for the daughter he had lost, but who was to have been forgiven at some future time—always at some time in the future—a season put off till it was too late, and she had gone for forgiveness elsewhere; while, above all, there was a strange, wild impending dread overtopping every cloud, and driving him to turn over and over in his pocket a small-stoppered bottle—a bottle without a label, and held so long in his hand that the glass was hot.

A noble mansion had the doctor built in imagination: one that should be wondrous in its prosperity and endurance; but it had no foundation—a bit had crumbled here, a wall there cracked, then a corner had given way (a key to the whole), and with a crash the fabric had come down—so that the builder's spirit was crushed as here he sat, shrunk and limp, waiting for the news of some fresh calamity, some new fall that should crush him yet more; for in his wild dreams he had seen his brother threatening him, and Septimus triumphantly shaking the will in his face. And so he sat on, hour after hour, clasping the tiny bottle in his hand—containing what? But a spoonful of some liquid fluid; while the stricken man still listened as if for something that he expected to happen that day.

There he sat, without fire, but feeling not the cold, hearing not the imploring whispered words of his wife—words uttered at the door after he had dismissed her, to wander up and down or sit shivering,

and refusing the offered hospitality of some feeling fellow-prisoner.

Deeper grew the wrinkles upon the doctor's brow as he sat. He had taken nothing for many hours, but a wine-glass stood upon the table, and more than once a trembling hand had been stretched out to grasp it. But he would wait another hour, he would wait until that other crushing news came, that other news hidden from his sight as by a black curtain, which ever trembled as though about to be raised. He would wait until the clocks struck again, just to think; though each stroke of hammer upon bell sounded funereally upon his ear. Again another hour, and another, and so on through the long night, through the grey, cold dawn; and again after the bright rising of the sun, which brought no hope to him.

"Only one other hour," said the crouching man, and the words hissed between his fevered lips. "Only another hour!" he muttered, while his blood-shot eyes seemed to dilate as he drew forth the bottle and held it up to the light, shook it, and watched the bright beads that trickled down the sides of the glass. His unshorn beard and sunken cheeks gave him a strangely haggard look—such that those who had known him in former days would have passed him without recognition.

Suddenly there was a step in the long corridor—one of many, but a step that he seemed to know; and then followed low voices, and the sound of a woman sobbing.

It had come at last—he had waited, and it was here—and a bitter smile trembled, it did not play, round the lips of Doctor Hardon, as he once more drew forth the bottle.

"This, this, this!" he kept on hissing, in a harsh whisper, as he smiled, thinking that the dark curtain which trembled in front would show him the future and not the present. And now he tried to draw forth the little stopper, but it was immovable. He tore at it fiercely, and then seized it with his teeth, but it broke short off, and he spat the piece angrily upon the floor.

"Now, now!" he muttered, as though there was not a moment to spare, while with trembling hand he seized the poker, and, holding the bottle above the wine-glass, struck it sharply, shattered it to atoms, and the liquid, mingled with sharp fragments, fell into the vessel, a large portion splashing over the table and moistening the doctor's hand.

"Now, now!" he muttered, seizing the glass; and as he gave one glance at the bright blue wintry sky, he raised the little vessel hesitatingly to his lips. Then the door was pushed open, Mrs. Hardon stepped in, shrieked, and dashed the undrained glass from her husband's hand, so that it fell shivered upon the cold hearthstone, when, falling at his feet and clutching his knees, the unhappy woman sobbed loudly.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, ask him to forgive us!" But the doctor only stood glaring at his visitor.

"Indeed, indeed, Septimus, I never knew it," sobbed Mrs. Hardon.

"It is of the past—let it rest," said her nephew, who could not remove his eyes from his uncle, now smiling feebly and pointing to the chamber-door.

"Why would you provoke this painful scene?" he said, in an injured tone. "You must have known, sir, that the interview would be most unfortunate. Pray go. My solicitors, Messrs. Keening. Every arrangement has been made, and the funeral will take place to-morrow."

Mrs. Hardon started up, and stood clasping one of her husband's hands, as she looked aghast in his face, while he continued, in the same feeble voice—

"No will, sir—illegitimate—pray leave—most painful," and with his disengaged hand he still pointed towards the door. "My solicitors, sir, Messrs. Keening."

"Pray—pray go," whispered Mrs. Hardon. "He is worn out, and ill with anxiety. I'll—I'll write, Septimus," and she hurried her visitor to the door. "But don't—don't punish us for what is past," she said, imploringly.

The look of Septimus Hardon was sufficient as he turned to the unhappy woman; and then he stepped into the passage with the intention of fetching medical assistance, for, as the door closed, he once more heard the doctor's voice—

"My solicitors, sir, Messrs. Keening. Pray go."

CHAPTER LIII.—THE LARK UNCAGED.

THAT was only a poor wedding that Jean Marais, with a bright spot in each of his sallow cheeks and a wild look in his dark eyes, gazed down upon from the gloomy old gallery of the church; only a quiet wedding that those two eager eyes had gazed upon, when their crippled owner had climbed slowly and laboriously up to the gallery to watch unseen while the ceremony was performed which gave Lucy Grey to her happy husband; but beneath those wild eyes there were convulsed features, cracked and quivering lips.

And the lark? He bore his treasure with him, the bird she had loved to hear; it nestled in his breast; and a stall-keeper hard by took charge of the cage. And there watched Jean unseen, while Lucy, turning her eyes upon her husband, accompanied him into the vestry.

Then below in the nave there was the buzz of expectation as the party came from the vestry—Lucy, blushing and fair, leaning upon the curate's arm; and he, proud of the treasure he had won, walking happily and elate by her side. But it was only a poor wedding—poor in the show that was made and in those who assembled; for Bennett's rents was empty that morning, and Mrs. Sims' sniff was heard again and again just inside the chancel; while the only wonder was that some of the children gathered together were not crushed beneath the wheels of the conveyances.

It was only a poor affair, but there was a light in many a face there that would have outshone the glories of a fashionable wedding. Even Mrs. Septimus forgot her troubles, and confided more than once to Aunt Fanny that she thought her complaint had got the turn.

But there knelt Jean the cripple, alone in the gallery, till the last looker-on had left, the last wheel rolled from the gate, and a sad stillness had fallen upon the empty church, when, with a bitter, heart-wrung cry, the young man crouched lower and lower,

burying his face in his hands. Then he slowly rose, and taking his crutch, painfully made his way towards the narrow door, his looks worn and weary, but with a strange light in his eye.

Pausing at length in the busy street, he took from his breast the bird he had so long tended, and started slightly, but with a bitter smile upon his lips, for in his emotion he had crushed the poor thing, and it panted feebly, with half-closed eye and open beak; but Jean only smiled. And with the same sad look he replaced the bird in his bosom, and then slowly and laboriously crept along, side by side, with the hurrying stream of passengers. Toiling on slowly and patiently, his crutch sounding loudly upon the pavement, with the same bitter look fixed as it were upon his lip, Jean Marais slowly toiled on till he was lost in the crowd.

Only a poor wedding; but Aunt Fanny was there, laughing and crying by turns, and vowing that she heard every word of the service, and that Arthur never spoke out so well before. And what a dress the old lady wore! Surely no poplin ever before displayed such plaits. And then, forgetful of dress, plaits, muslin, everything, was it not a treat to see her take Lucy to her warm old heart when they had returned to Essex-street, as the fair girl knelt at her feet, the large eyes gazing up so appealingly, and seeming to say—"Don't despise me for being so humble!" But, there, had she been a princess, she could have had no warmer nook in the old dame's heart, for was not Arthur happy? And then those arms, that of old lay so placidly across her black silk apron—worn even at the return from the wedding, and brought in a reticule—became restless to a degree, ever animated by the desire to embrace her children.

Did she love Lucy? Had not Arthur, the wisest of men, chosen her? And did not that spread such a mantle of holiness around the maiden that, even had Aunt Fanny never seen her, she would have battled for her to the death? Would he have chosen any but the purest and noblest of heart? she asked herself again and again. So she divided her love between them, and then, upon the return from church, laughed and cried by turns; for, said she, "I must leave poor Arty now."

Arthur Sterne was silent, but he smiled as he saw two soft round arms circle Aunt Fanny's neck, imprisoning her as their owner whispered words whose import he could guess.

A quiet repast, and a short interval of preparation before the start for a trip, only some miles from town, an easy drive for a few days' visit to where the sweet breath of the country blew; and then the elders standing at the door watching the departing vehicle, and the waving hands, as the wheels rattled along the echoing street; and then upstairs, for Aunt Fanny and Mrs. Septimus to talk of their children, while Septimus Hardon roamed the streets.

"Oh, the bright lovely country!" cried Lucy, as the carriage rolled on between hedgerows here and there silvered with the scented May, whose fragrance was borne by the light breeze through the open windows. "Oh, the bright lovely country!" she cried; "am I not foolish, Arthur!" she sobbed;

"but the tears will come, for I feel that this happiness cannot last!"

The word "Arthur" was spoken hesitatingly, as if it were strange to her lips, and she hardly dared to use it; her eyes were fixed for a moment upon those of her husband, and then she glided down to the bottom of the fly, and kneeled at his feet as he fondly parted the hair upon her broad forehead.

"You are not angry with me for being so childish?" she murmured.

"Angry!" he replied; and the tone in which he said that word was sufficient.

"Don't think me foolish," she said; "but let us walk a little here, where the grass borders the road; for it seems wrong to hurry past the lovely green trees, after the close misery of London. They are new to me, Arthur; and look! look! there are flowers, and birds; and see how the bright sunshine dances amongst the leaves! But there," she said, sadly; "you smile at my folly, and forget what all this is to me, after years of prisoning London."

But the next minute the fly had stopped, and, relieved of its load, resumed its way; and, happy and proud, Arthur Sterne looked down upon his newly-wedded wife, elate to see the pure, intense love of all that was beautiful in nature which emanated from this escaped prisoner of life; while Lucy was divided between delight of the scene around her, and reproach for her so-called indifference towards her husband. And so they walked, inhaling the sweets of the early summer afternoon, and finding in them joys known only to those who have escaped but freshly from the great City's miseries. And still on and on, almost in silence, enveloped as they were in the happiness of the present.

"Listen!" cried Lucy, as she stopped suddenly, and laid a finger upon her husband's lip—a finger now white and delicate, once fretted and workworn. "Listen!" she whispered, "and close your eyes. Might not that be poor Jean's lark?" And then both stood listening, as in those days of the past, when their prisoned souls had gazed up eagerly into the bright blue sky, and they had drunk in the pure gushing lay of the speckled songster.

"Tears, more tears, Lucy?" whispered the curate. "Are you not happy?"

No words came for a reply, nothing but a look; as the bright eyes brimmed over, and a sob rose from the burdened heart.

"It seems too much—as if it could not last," whispered Lucy; "and that song brought back so many sorrows, dear—the court, and so much of the past. But you will forgive me, Arthur?"

Again the same hesitating speech, as if it were an assumption upon her part to call him by his name, and she half dreaded rebuke.

"What does the driver want?" said Mr. Sterne; for the man was shouting and making signs.

By the time they had overtaken the vehicle the man had dismounted and was by the bank, stooping over a reclining figure; and on approaching nearer, the curate recognized the cripple, Jean, lying apparently asleep, holding his lark to his lips, while his crutch was by his side. •But if the master slept, it was not so with the bird; for its soft feathers were ruffled, its wings half-open, and the lids drawn

partly over the little dark, bead-like eyes; the crest lay smooth, the throat-feathers rose not, the wings had fluttered for the last time; the bright, gushing lay would thrill through prisoned hearts in Bennett's-rents no more—the lark was dead.

And its master? To get one more look, one farewell glance, he had toiled wearily on, mile after mile, towards the village where he had heard they would rest; and on he pressed, with a strength evoked by the despair of his heart, till he had sat down to rest by the wayside, and sunk back exhausted."

In an instant Lucy was upon her knees by his side, and had raised his head, while her husband's hand was in the cripple's breast. Then he slowly opened his eyes and stared wildly round till they rested upon her who supported his head, when his features softened, and a smile came once more upon his lips as they seemed to part to form the words "Good-bye!"

And then slowly and imperceptibly the smile faded from his lip, the light from his eye; and as they gazed upon him, a cold sternness stole over the poor youth's countenance, till, with agony depicted in her every feature, Lucy looked up appealingly at her husband.

But Jean was dead—passed away; for he had toiled through the streets, nerved by a stern determination—a wild despair—on through the suburbs, and so out into the country; the one purpose always in his mind—to be where she would come once more. On still, slowly, painfully, hour after hour, till he sank exhausted, to die of a ruptured blood-vessel.

And still, of a summer's evening, may the loungee in the great streets of the West come upon a knot of idlers; and, pausing for a few moments, listen to divers sharply-uttered commands, given in French, to a pair of wretched poodles; who fetch and carry, rise erect, and march about with aspect doleful and disconsolate, till a few of the bystanders drop half-pence in the basket one of the dogs carries in his mouth. Then a fresh pitch is made; the performance again gone through; and then on again; on after *ma mère* of the sharp and eager look—the harsh, cracked voice; on again, with drooping ears and tail—unlion-like of aspect; on again, perhaps to cast a look of envy at some free and rollicking idle dog, or of condolence at the miserable sharp-eyed monkey performing on the table, rapid in every movement, but more rapid in the glance of its little dark, blow-watching eye. And at last, when the streets grow thin of passengers, and the dogs tired and blundering home to the court where they dwell—a court yet standing, though Bennett's-rents is no more; another court, where the flags lie broken, and the refuse-choked channel festers with the water from the hard-used pump; where the children revel by day in the dirt and filth, and Death oft and oft again beckons the undertaker to come with his shambling horse and shabby Shillibeer-hearse; where the pigeons cluster upon the housetops and coo at daybreak, and then circle in flights, while men of the Jarker stamp urge them on. Home to another old house, and up the groaning stairs, where even by night the twittering of birds can be heard in

lodgers' rooms—prisoners dwelling in a prison within a prison; here, too, the click of a sewing-machine—patent—man's make; there, the sigh of a sewing-machine—not patent—God's make; and up the rickety stairs to another attic, where cages hang—empty cages, kept because they were those of Jean; where the crutch stands in the corner beneath the lark's home, brought back by the neighbour who keeps a stall, but empty too: canaries, linnets, finches, passed away, while the lark lies upon the breast of its master—the cripple Jean—and the turf grows green above his resting-place at Highgate.

"*En avant—venez donc—mes chiens!* Home!" though it be not Bennett's-rents.

CHAPTER LIV.—MAD.

IN one of those vast piles of building a short distance down the main line of a great railway, a strange-looking elderly man, and one whose dress bespeaks the clergyman, are passing from ward to ward upon a visit. The man with them, in his quiet livery, raises the brass-chained key he carries to open lock after lock—one key for hundreds—and they pass on by sights of the most sorrowful; for they are amongst those of their fellows in whom the light of reason burns but dimly or is extinct. At last they stand by a window looking upon an extensive yard, where some fifty patients, clothed in grey serge, walk about for exercise—some hurriedly, some talking, some excited, others calm. And now one visitor lays a trembling hand upon his companion's arm as, nearing the window comes a portly, grey, smiling man, rolling solemnly along with imposing gait, wearing a stiff white-paper cravat, with a card snuff-box in his hand, and a straw-plait chain meandering over his grey serge vest. Quiet and harmless, he goes about the yard feeling the pulses of his fellow-patients, and nods at them and smiles encouragement.

"Is there any prospect of his recovery?" says the clergyman to the warder, who is looking unconcernedly on.

"Whose, sir?" says the attendant. "His? the doctor's? Oh, no, sir; not the least. Stark mad!"

THE END.

CANINE SAGACITY.—At Zug, in Switzerland, in the church of St. Oswald, is, or was, a monument to the memory of the Chevalier Gaspard de Brandenburg and his dog, representing the chevalier, and the dog lying at his feet. The legend is, that the chevalier, when crossing the mountain of St. Gotthard, near Aerola, accompanied by a servant, was overtaken and buried by an avalanche. The dog escaped the rush of snow, but did not abandon his master. The convent was not far distant, and thither the animal repaired, and by his howling finally attracted notice. He was followed, and led the way to where his master and the servant were buried, and scratched at the snow. Eventually the two travellers were dug out alive, after thirty-six hours' entombment. They stated that, while thus buried, they distinctly heard the howling of the dog and the voices of the relieving party from the convent. The chevalier, by his will, ordered the tombstone thus erected, which bears the date of A.D. 1728.

The Auxiliary Postman.

THE postman is certainly one of our hardest-working public servants, and one with whose duty we are all perhaps more familiar than with that of any other. We take the auxiliary postman, because, while his work is essentially the same as that of his more fortunate coadjutor, the first or second class letter-carrier, he certainly would seem to have a greater claim to public attention. That great natural historian, Josh Billings, in one of his profound entomological notes, gives the dimensions of the house fly, though he says he is not quite sure he is correct, for "he won't stand still long enuf to be meshured." Any one who will undertake to get together a few details of the daily work and circumstances of a postman will experience very much the same difficulty. He is either on his way to the office and has only just so many minutes to reach it, or he is on his way from the office, tired and hungry, and anxious to get home, or else he is on his walk with his letters, and to loiter and gossip is, of course, quite contrary to the regulations. Added to all of which these same regulations sternly forbid, under all sorts of pains and penalties, any unauthorized communications for publication.

It might occur to some inexperienced minds, quite unacquainted with the awful importance appertaining to official routine, that a simple way of acquiring full information on points of pay, organization, work, and so forth, would be to apply to official quarters. Any unsophisticated inquirer might possibly apply to a district postmaster. This gentleman would be pretty certain to display the utmost civility, and to express his regret that he could give no information without the written authority of the secretary, to whom he would refer the applicant. The secretary would probably be equally polite, and personally quite as eager to accord every facility for the public information; but, great man though he is in St. Martin's-le-Grand, the chances are ten to one that he would shrink from the tremendous responsibility involved in any statement as to the significance of the stripes on a "suburban" letter-carrier's breast, or the number of hours an "auxiliary" had to work in the week for 13s. 6d. To be strictly regular, all such inquiries should be addressed to the Postmaster-General, who, if written to on the subject, would be sure to reply, probably referring the applicant to the last official report—which might, just as likely as not, be "out of print" at Messrs. Spottiswoode's. All this might strike the unsophisticated as verging on the ridiculous; but here again a great mistake would be made. Experience has, no doubt, shown the great men of St. Martin's-le-Grand that the most effectual way of meeting criticism is to impugn its accuracy. How can criticism be effective and unanswerable unless it is accurate, and how can it be accurate unless derived from official sources?

Even Parliament may fail at times to elicit as much information as could be wished, and it is just possible that the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury are quite in the dark as to the number of men in London who are doing every day about eight hours' hard, ex-

hausting work for the sum of 2s. 3d. "If anybody was to get up in Parliament and ask any questions about 'suburbans' and 'auxiliaries,'" said one man recently who had grown grey—as well he might—in a very short time in the service on this scale of pay, "they have got their answer already cut and dried."

The regular postman begins his work at 7.1 or 18s. a week; he has two suits of uniform a year; there are the Christmas-boxes; and after ten years' service he may get one stripe on his breast and an extra shilling a week. Other five years of good conduct may bring another stripe and another shilling, and when he has done twenty years of service he may get a third stripe and a third shilling. He will then be in receipt of the maximum letter-carrier's pay, of 33s. a week, and he has his pension to look forward to—all of which, if stated in Parliament with proper emphasis and embellishments of oratory, might seem to make a pretty good case for the "suburban" of the first-class. If inquiries were pressed a little farther, the auxiliaries would probably be represented, as a small number of shoemakers, tailors, and so forth, who were employed during a small portion of the day to take one or two deliveries when the regular letter-carriers were unequal to the work of a district. "At our office," said the officer just referred to, "there's two suburbans and eight auxiliaries." That is not to be regarded as the prevailing proportion, we believe, though it is by no means infrequent in London.

How many auxiliaries and how many regular officers there are, perhaps, the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand do not think it worth while to set forth. In the last report—that is to say, the one for 1876—letter-carriers, sorters, and messengers are lumped together at 16,393 men. It is at least safe to affirm that a very large proportion of the letter-carrying of London, involving as it does the safe and honest conveyance of an almost incredible amount of property, is done by mere lads from the telegraph department, or by "auxiliaries" who are paid at the rate of 9d. a delivery. A man must have some *bona fide* employment before he can be appointed as assistant postman, and he may probably have three deliveries in the course of the day. "I am out at a quarter before seven in the morning," said one of these men, "and I have done generally about a quarter before nine. Out again at 4.20 and have done about 6.20; of course, according to the delivery, sometimes heavier and sometimes lighter. At eight I am on again, and I have done about ten at night."

If a man had only his postal work to attend to, he might sometimes live close to the office, but his trade must be considered, and he is lucky if he can manage to live within a quarter of an hour's walk of it. Two hours a day in getting to and from headquarters are not an unfair average to put as the time a man with three deliveries a day to attend to will occupy in going to and from his work, and the auxiliary postman may fairly be said to do eight hours' walking every day. The office finds him one uniform a year, but unhappily the one uniform does not comprise a good, sound, comfortable pair of boots. "And many's the winter night, sir, I've ploughed my

way in sleet and darkness," said our weather-beaten old veteran, "along a new-fangled thoroughfare, where all the houses was without numbers, and all of 'em up steps, and two or three of 'em p'rhaps with big dogs prowlin' about in the front garden, and the clay and water in the paths as hadn't got no pavements a-hoozin' through the soles of my shoes, up into my toes, as you may say, and me as suffers with rheumatics. You see, sir, my trade's very often bad in the winter time, and when you've laid out your little bit o' money at the end o' the week there aint much left for such things as boots. Some o' them new roads as I ha' been on before now 'd take pretty nigh your pay out of a pair o' boots some days. And there's another thing too them roads 'll do. They 'll give 'e a huncommon appetite. A good thing that? Well, yes, no doubt, when you've got something decent-like to meet it with; and I dessay the Post-office 'd reckon a good appetite as a sort of perkisite. Eight blessed hours a-day, many a time, I've been on my poor feet, and with a hempty stomach very often when trade was bad—six hours actual delivery of letters and two hours or more getting to and from the office; and for these eight hours I've got, they tells me, as can reckon, a little under 3d. a-piece. All as I earn over 13s. 6d. a week is what I does over and above eight hours on the streets and up and down steps, sometimes in the broiling heat, sometimes in the wet and snow, and I gets bullied at one house because I knocks too loud after they've kept me a-waitin' where there aint no letter-box, as there ought to be, and I gets snapped at at another because I am late, and growled at somewhere else because I've left a letter at the wrong house. Them addresses 'd very often puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, and letters goes wrong in consequence, and then there's complaints to the head office, and I'm hauled up. Temptations? Well, yes. I've had them, too. A man may mean to keep square; but it aint pleasant to think, when you get cold and wet, and hungry, and knocked up, and feel things are going crooked at home, 'taint pleasant to think that every week, maybe, cheques and stamps and Post-office orders—and cash, too, I've had before now—are passing through your hands, and might perhaps be accidentally lost once in a way, without anybody but yourself knowing much about it. Of course there's test letters to look out for, and to be bowled out means five years' penal servitude. Thank God, I never run no risks o' that! But a man as is hard-worked and badly paid, and perhaps with trouble at home, and prospects altogether anything but bright, aint the man as ought to be tempted with letter-carrying. Threepence-ha'penny an hour aint fair pay to keep men honest; and though it's a little certainty like, we all feels as we are bad-used men. We aint got no prospects; we can't ever hope to be taken on as suburbans. They don't do that—they takes in boys from the telegraphs. We aint got no chance of promotion, nor no privileges, nor no certain positions, nor no pensions, nor no nothing; and then the regulations says that if we have the impudence to tell any tales to the Press hout we goes. I'm pretty well sick of it, sir; but howsomever, I've had my say."

The Shepherd's Dog.

IF the wonderful intelligence of the colley, or collie, as different authorities spell it, was more understood in this country, the dog would be better appreciated and we should see more of them. The Newfoundland has generally been placed at the head of the canine kingdom for superior instinct, or intelligence, and the collie as next; but his friends of the present generation are inclined to put the latter first. Certainly, the tales told of his wonderful quickness, some of which we shall presently relate, would indicate that in this respect he attains something very nearly approaching reasoning power, if not an actual understanding of language itself. Dr. Gordon Stables, who, being a Scotchman and an ardent lover of collies, writes feelingly and fluently on the subject, contends that the word collie (which latter is also his mode of spelling) should be pronounced with the *o* long, as though it had but a single *l*. The institution of dog shows had its effect upon collies, as it had upon nearly all other breeds of dogs, and the effect of bringing him into this prominent and public notice (in England) was to make known his good qualities, not only for his peculiar work, but as a companion and house dog. The result of the latter demand was an effort on the part of breeders—at least, those who breed to supply a popular want—to improve his beauty, and to this end he was crossed with the black-and-tan setter, the result being a dog with a finer coat, in many instances a better tail, and ears that were not at all like those of the original collie. We have seen such in this country, and if we were judging we should scrutinize very closely the coats of such dogs as came under our inspection; for it is probably in the coat that the chief characteristic of the collie is to be found—the coat that should be impervious to the severest form of “Scotch mist,” no matter how long the exposure. After all, if merely a beautiful companion and pet were wanted, the black-and-tan setter in his purity is all that can be desired; and while the collie in his native condition is one of the most valuable animals who ranks as assistant to man, it seems like desecration to attempt to improve or change him for the sake of mere beauty, when the change may result in the lessening of the wonderful intelligence given him by nature.

We have said that the collie is not appreciated in this country. We should have said that he is known to comparatively few; but he is unquestionably a “coming” dog, as is indicated by the increased number of entries at our dog shows.

The head of a well-bred collie when in full feather will look disproportionately small in comparison with the body. A dog twenty-two and a half inches high at the shoulder should have a head nine and a half inches long, measuring from the occiput to end of the nose. The general appearance is “foxy,” but the head should not be too flat. The eyes are bright, and extremely quick and intelligent, and of a dark hazel colour. The ear should be small, and what the Scotch call “worn at half cock;” that is, when the animal is listening it should be pricked, with the top falling forward. As in all animals where speed is an object, the shoulders should slope well

backward, and should be well supplied with muscle. The chest should be deep rather than wide, the forelegs perfectly straight, and the elbow well let down. The foot should be the round cat-foot, such as a pointer's, and not the long hare-foot; and in a dog intended for active work with sheep the pad should be firm and tough. The ribs should be well rounded and the back ones pretty deep, and the loins strong and muscular. The coat, as we have intimated, we regard as the most important feature in the conformation of this dog. On the face and ears it should be smooth, but on the neck and shoulders it should be massed with a deep frill on the chest. On the back and loins, down to the root of the tail, the coat is abundant, and should part in the centre; and the tail itself should be heavily feathered, and even bushy, being carried gaily, and with a curl, but not over the back. The hind legs should be smooth below the hocks, and the forelegs, while being smooth in front, should be moderately feathered behind. The texture and quality of the coat are most important.

Dr. Stables says that as that glorious garment, the Highland plaid, is to the Highland shepherd, so is his coat to the collie—it protects him by day and shields him at night. On the breast and on the breech it is somewhat finer in texture than on the back, for these portions of the dog's anatomy require protection from cold more than anything else; but over the neck, shoulders, back, and loins the long outer hair is as hard as so many needles, while underneath is a woolly growth both warm and waterproof. The fashionable colours for collies are black-and-tan, or black, tan, and white—the tan being not that of the Gordon setter, but much lighter. The white is generally on the forelegs or feet and hind feet, on the chest and around the neck, with, perhaps, a blaze on the face; but there are many colours that are perfectly legitimate, and in some parts of England there is a blue, mottled with black, or brown and white, that is much prized.

The institution of field trials for collies has done much of late to bring them into notice; and we believe that Mr. R. J. Lloyd Price, of Bala, Wales, is entitled to the credit of having originated them. We believe that at these trials, which usually take place on the hills, the dog is given three sheep to pen without assistance, which is much more difficult than penning a number would be; and is also sent off a long distance alone to bring a few sheep home from the hills. As the shepherds share in the prizes given at these trials, it is likely that the emulation thus excited will aid in developing to the fullest extent the natural sagacity of the animal.

Dr. Stables, in one of his articles on the collie, tells the following amusing story:—“I wonder,” says he, “whether my old friend, Peter McIvor of that ilk, a godly man and an elder of the kirk, ever heard of Darwin? He, Peter, settled the origin of the collie, at least to his own satisfaction if not to mine. ‘Sure enough,’ said Peter, ‘he was made before Adam himself. What could Abel have done without a collie, and what could Noah have done in the ark with all his beasties without a *real Hielan*’

collie?" The same writer mentions that he was once in a farmer's house in Scotland while Kooran, the collie, was lying by the fireside apparently asleep. "Gang o'er the moor, collie, laddie, and fetch the sheep hame." The farmer gave the order as quietly as if speaking to a man servant. Kooran jumped up with alacrity, looked very pleased indeed, and trotted out, wagging his tail, but showing no excitement, for he was going on a mission of trust that required both caution and thought. "O'er the moor" in this case meant a journey of fully two miles; but in one hour Kooran was back with the sheep, barking to have the yard gate opened. Half an hour later the farmer looked out at the window. "Oh, bother take that cat!" said he, "I won't have an onion this year." Now, this time Kooran didn't take time to go out by the door, but darted like lightning through the open window, in a state of agitation and merriment that contrasted strongly with his staid demeanour when going for the sheep.

St. John, in his "Sketches of Highland Sport," tells of a shepherd who, to prove the quickness of his dog, who was lying before the fire, said, in the middle of a sentence concerning something else, "I'm thinking the cow is in the potatoes," laying no stress upon the words. The dog, who appeared to be asleep, immediately jumped up, and, leaping through the open window, scrambled up the turf roof of the house, from which he could see the potatoe field; he then, not seeing the cow, ran into the byre where she was, and finding that all was right came back to the house. After a short time the shepherd repeated the words, and the dog repeated his look-out; but on the false alarm being given the third time, the dog got up, and, wagging his tail, looked his master in the face with so comical an expression of interrogation that those present could not help laughing aloud at him, on which, with a slight growl, he laid himself down in his warm corner with an offended air, as if determined not to be made a fool of again.

"Stonehenge," in his latest edition of "Dogs of the British Islands," gives a remarkable instance of this ability on the part of the collie to understand what is being said about him:—"Entering the drawing-room of a lady who has a celebrated dog of this variety as a pet, I was met with the question, 'What do you think of my pet—is he not a perfect beauty?' After looking him over as he lay on the rug, and with a desire to tease my hostess, to whom I owed a Roland or two for her many previous Olivers, administered in badinage, I replied very quietly, 'Yes, certainly, if he had but a collie coat and a little more ruff.' The words were hardly out of my mouth, when the dog rose from his recumbent position, seized one of my feet in his mouth, gave it a gentle but vicious little shake, not sufficient to scratch the leather of my boot, and then lay down again. There was no emphasis on my part, and not a word uttered by the lady until after the act was completed, when I will not say that eyes and tongue told me I was rightly served. From a long knowledge of the dog, I really am inclined to believe that he knew I was 'picking holes in his coat,' and resented the injustice accordingly."

The Grampus.

THE following account of this curious creature is from St. John's, Newfoundland. The writer says:—A very unusual scene was witnessed recently in our harbour. Two full-grown grampuses entered the Narrows in the wake of one of the Allan line of steamers, and were observed dashing rapidly about the harbour, blowing at intervals, and seemingly quite bewildered. A boat's crew from a man-of-war, which happened to be in the harbour, was despatched in pursuit of one of them and chased it to the head of the harbour, where its tail caught between the piles of a wharf, and it became completely powerless. Ropes were passed round it, and it was speedily dragged into shallow water in one of the coves and despatched. It proved to be a full-grown grampus, 25 ft. 4 in. in length and 15 ft. in circumference. Its companion managed to find the entrance to the harbour, and escaped.

The dead grampus was cut up for the sake of the oil it contained, but very little could be extracted. I managed to obtain the skull and jaws, which are in perfect condition. They have been thoroughly cleaned, and I shall present them to our local museum. There are eleven teeth in the upper and under side of each jaw—forty-four in all—very powerful, large, conical and somewhat hooked, those farthest back being flattened at the summit. Two of them are broken, indicating the severe battles in which it had been engaged.

This armament of powerful teeth, which interlock when the mouth is closed, indicates the voracious and warlike character of the grampus. It attacks and devours seals and the smaller porpoises and dolphins, but lives chiefly on cod, halibut, skate, and turbot, of which it consumes immense numbers. It is stated that a number of them will in company attack a Greenland whale, biting and tearing its flesh with their powerful teeth, some seizing the tail, others the lips and tongue, like so many mastiffs fighting a wild bull, and seldom ceasing the contest till finally victorious.

I made a careful examination of the great animal soon after its capture. The colour is black on the upper part of the body, suddenly changing to white on the sides and abdomen. Immediately above and rather behind the eye is a white patch, not unlike an eyelid. The dorsal fin, about the middle of the body, is very large, being about 4 ft. high, and the pectorals are also large. Its head is more rounded than that of a porpoise, and its forehead more convex; its snout is short and round. The lower jaw is somewhat bent upward, broader, but not so long as the upper.

The grampus is not often seen around these coasts, Greenland and Davis Straits being its favourite resort. It is common in the British seas and firths. This is the first instance of the capture of a grampus on our shores of which I have heard. It is no easy task to master one of these powerful animals, and had it not been that the tail of this one got entangled between the logs of wood forming the breastwork of a wharf, it would have escaped. The grampus is at once cautious and daring. It is on record that four of them were taken in the

Thames at different times, between 1759 and 1793, and one in Lynn harbour in 1829.

Sir Joseph Banks gives the particulars of one taken in the Thames in 1772:—"After being pierced with three harpoons, it pulled the attached boat twice from Blackwall to Greenwich, and once as far as Deptford, against the tide, running at the rate of eight miles an hour; and for a long time unimpeded by the lance wounds which were inflicted when it came to the surface. So long as it was alive no boat could venture to approach it, and the dying efforts of this formidable creature were very terrible. It was finally killed opposite Greenwich Hospital."

I suppose the one I have been describing must have got thoroughly exhausted by its efforts to escape, otherwise it would have made a more desperate fight in its last moments. Probably never before was a grampus caught by the tail. The skull, with the mouth open, displaying the teeth, will be a striking object in our museum.

Lichens.

LICHENS run through the whole chromatic scale, and show what striking effects Nature can produce by an harmonious combination of a few simple lines and hues. Most of them are of a quiet grey tint, but some display the most vivid colours. One species covers trees and rocks with bright yellow powdery patches; another sprinkles them with a kind of green rust, especially in the neighbourhood of large towns. Almost every old wall, castle, and rocky seashore is emblazoned with the brilliant deep yellow rosettes of the common wall parmelia. Olive-green and pale primrose-yellow lichens diversify the surface of moorland boulders and dykes. And, what is very remarkable, the higher we ascend the mountain-side, the farther north we penetrate, the brighter becomes the colouring and the more graceful and luxuriant the form of lichens; presenting in this respect a parallel to many flowering plants, such as the birch, whose stem is whiter and whose leaves are more shining and fragrant in Norway than in this country.

One of the loveliest species is the "Geographical Lichen" (*Lecidea geographica*), which is the most arctic, antarctic, and alpine plant in the world, occupying the extreme outpost of vegetation in altitude and latitude; and its yellow-green crust becomes brighter, smoother, and more continuous, and its characteristic black dots and lines, like towns, and rivers, and boundaries on a map, become deeper and glossier, the nearer we approach the limit of perpetual snow. It is a fit companion of those exquisite alpine flowers that bloom their fairest in the same desolate circumstances, and exhibit a grace and beauty far surpassing those of their favoured sisters of the plain.

The little cup lichen, that holds up its tiny goblets in myriads to catch the dewdrops upon the turfy top of every old wall and bank, assumes in one of its kindred forms that grows at a great height upon the mountains a larger size, a more elegant shape, and a more tender colour. Nothing of the kind can be lovelier than this mountain species, with its soft

sulphur-coloured cups, decked round the edge with waxen heads of the most brilliant scarlet, creeping over the bleak alpine turf, and forming, with the gay flowers of the purple saxifrage and the moss campion, a tiny garden in the wilderness.

On the wildest islands of the Antarctic Ocean, where nothing else but lichens grow, some of the finest species abound, whose large polished black shields contrast beautifully with their yellow shrubby stems; and on the tundras, or vast plains that border the Polar Ocean, the eye is delighted beyond measure with the delicate and intricate branching and the snowy purity of the larger lichens, which form almost the only vegetation.

One lichen in New Zealand imitates the finest lace-work; another, found on our grey northern moors, resembles miniature coral; and on the highest and most exposed ridges of the Scottish mountains one leafy species occurs whose under-side is of the most splendid orange colour, while its upper surface, constantly wetted by the clouds and mists, is of the most vivid green, varied by the chocolate colour of its large, flat, shield-like fructification.

Thus, where we should expect the vegetation to partake of the sombre nature of the locality, and to be dwarfed, ill-shapen, and discoloured by the unfavourable circumstances, we find the most perfect and luxuriant forms; and just as the lichens in our sheltered woods and valleys flourish best in wild wintry weather, so do their congeners in the exposed altitudes and latitudes of the world, where there is a perpetual winter and storms constantly prevail, exhibit their brightest colouring and their most graceful shapes; reading to us thus the most needful lesson of one of the sweet uses of adversity—viz., to perfect that which concerneth us, to complete the ideal which a too easy and pleasant life often fails to realize.—*Sunday Magazine*.

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Dutch the Diver:

The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—A GOOD RESOLUTION.



IN the next and following days the toil continued, and work, rest, and refreshment were all that were thought of. Even Dutch had been seized now by the thirst for wealth, and, hardly looking at Hester, he toiled on at his task, while she, pale and rigid, kept watch over him, never once gaining confidence as she saw his many descents, but always tortured by the horror of that first day.

To her great relief, though, Lauré had hardly noticed her, and there seemed to be an unspoken

truce existing between them. She could see that he was one of the most industrious of the workers, and she shuddered as she felt why this was, and knew that some terrible catastrophe might ere now have taken place on the schooner only that Lauré wanted the divers to do their work to the full before he asserted himself.

And yet she dared not speak, feeling that to utter a warning would be to sign her husband's death warrant; while he, giving no heed to, perhaps not crediting, her sufferings, passed her by at times without a look.

But a change was rapidly approaching, and it took place so suddenly as almost to surprise Hester herself.

The only thing that had disturbed the harmony of the past week had been the bitter opposition of John Studwick to the advances made by the young doctor. So far from the presence of a medical man on board being of advantage to the invalid, it had served to irritate and annoy him; and more than once he had angrily turned his back and drawn his sister away with the petty jealousy of a child more than a man, all which the doctor had taken in quite good part, while Bessy had more than one hearty cry to herself, as she called it.

Hester and she were like sisters now, and in consequence a coolness existed towards Dutch, who saw nothing, however, but, miser-like, gloated over

the enormous wealth he was helping to pile up for himself and partner.

It was on the ninth day of the diving that, all elate and congratulating themselves on the calm and delightful weather that had attended their efforts, the task began once more. The sand had been well mastered, and great, half-rotten, water-hardened pieces of timber had been removed, and the silver was sent up, from the ease with which it was obtained, at a greater rate than ever.

Dutch had been down five times, and he was now down for the sixth, having succeeded Mr. Parkley, and wading to the hole that had been made, after filling the bucket with some difficulty, the silver having now become scarce, he took his bar and tried to remove a piece of blackened wood that showed plainly in the mid-day sun.

It seemed quite fast, but a good wrench moved it, and, lifting it with care, Dutch carried it a few paces, and thrust it between two of the ribs behind him.

A man shut up in a diver's helmet and suit is not in a condition to feel much elation; but Dutch's heart beat rapidly as he resumed, and stooped to gaze down at what he had found. There was no mistake, though. The hold of the wreck had been cleared from side to side, and there was evidently no silver—in fact, as far as it was concerned, the treasure was won. He tried the iron probe to find sand or wood—sand or wood, forward or aft; while, of course, the possibility of anything being found to right or left was bounded by the old ribs which now stood out clear to the keel.

But here, aft of the silver treasure, and separated originally no doubt by a strong timber partition, one of the timbers of which Dutch had wrenched away, dull, red, and glistening, totally free from shelly concretion, but in places bound together by the fine sand, lay, as he cleared away the sand from the surface, and plainly marked out by the black wood that surrounded it on three sides, forming a little chest-like place about four feet by six, but whose sides, of black, rotten timber, were ten inches thick, what was evidently of greater value than the mass of silver they had obtained.

For there before him lay, neatly packed as they had been by busy hands at least two hundred and fifty years before, hundreds upon hundreds of little rough ingots of gold. Not a bar was displaced; for the massive framework in which they had been stowed, though rotten, had not given way like what had probably surrounded the silver, which lay tossed about at random.

"Wealth, wealth, rich gold," muttered Dutch, as he signalled for more air; and then, looking more closely at his find, he could see by sweeping away the sand that slowly trickled back, as if eager to

cover the treasure it had held secret so long, that the gold had not been packed as he had supposed, but had evidently been in little wooden boxes, which had rotted quite away, the places of the wood being filled up by sand, which lay in rectangular lines.

"The silver has all been saved, without doubt," said Dutch to himself as he gazed at his find, and thought of the delight with which the news would be received by his partner. Then he turned, to get the bucket and fill it, wishing himself on deck when it arrived there, to watch the astonishment of those who emptied it.

As he moved he had again to signal for more air, and, looking down, he saw the sand slowly trickling back over the gold, so that in a very few moments it would have been covered.

He picked up the shovel, meaning to throw the sand in that part more effectually away, when once more the difficulty of breathing attacked him.

He signalled for more air, but no more came, neither to his next signal; and, feeling that something must be wrong with the apparatus, he was already on his way to the steps, when he received a signal to come up; and on reaching the surface, with the air becoming each moment more deficient, he was quickly helped on board and relieved of his helmet.

"I couldn't help it, Mr. Dutch," exclaimed Rasp; "the leather's giving way on the piston, and we must have a good repair."

"But it's held out just long enough," said Mr. Parkley, "for Rasp tells me we've got to the end, and he only just left you a little of the silver to send up."

"Yes, Mr. Pug, I tried all round, but there was nothing but wood and sand—wood and sand everywhere. 'Cept what you've sent up, I say there wasn't a bit more silver left."

"Why didn't you say so before I went down?" said Dutch.

"Because I wanted to hear what you thought, and let you judge for yourself," growled Rasp, handling a screw hammer.

As they spoke, the men, who had been pumping and hauling, gathered round, evidently eager to hear what was said, and this made Dutch alter the words he was about to utter.

"Rasp is right," he said, "I have sent up the last of the silver."

"And have you tried well round with the rod?"

"Everywhere," said Dutch, "and touched the ship's timbers right down into the sand. There isn't another bar of silver, I should say."

"Well," said Mr. Parkley, "man's never satisfied. I was quite ready to get more. There, my lads, we'll clean up the apparatus."

"Yes," said the captain, "and clear the decks; they want it badly enough. You've worked well, my lads, and you shall have a bit of a feast for this. Pollo shall prepare you a supper, and we'll drink success to our next venture."

The men gave a bit of a cheer, but on the whole they looked rather disappointed; and Dutch, he hardly knew why, held his peace about the gold. One thing was evident—nothing could be done to get it on deck till the worn valve of the air-pump

had been repaired, and this Rasp declared would take him all the afternoon, for he would have to apply new leathers and india-rubber.

So the diving suits were hung up to dry, the helmets polished dry and clean, and placed upon their stands. Mr. Parkley and the doctor, who had looked upon this part as more in his province—Mr. Parkley said because it helped to destroy life—had coiled up the wires, emptied the battery, and placed the dynamite in safety, and the rough shelly matter was thrown over the side; while Dutch, who had still kept his discovery to himself, was down below, close to the end of the wind-sail—that canvas funnel that took down a constant current of fresh air—smoking a cigar with Mr. Wilson, the naturalist, who was chatting away about his birds, and his determination to have another run or two on shore to shoot, asking his companion to accompany him.

"It would do the ladies so much good, too, I'm sure," said Mr. Wilson. "And really, Mr. Pugh, I never dare speak to Miss Studwick now," he added, with a sigh; "for if I do, her brother looks daggers at me; and if I mention Mrs. Pugh, you look just as cross."

Dutch had been saying "Yes" and "No" in a musing manner, hardly hearing what his companion said; but the mention of his wife's name made him start angrily round and glare at the speaker.

"There, that's just how Mr. Studwick, junior, looks at me," said the naturalist, simply. "A regular jealous, fierce look. I wish you would not treat me so, Mr. Pugh," he continued, earnestly, and with a pleading look in his weak, lamb-like face, "for I like you—I do, indeed. I always have liked you, Mr. Pugh; and how you can fancy I have dishonourable views about Mrs. Pugh, I can't think. It shocks me, Mr. Pugh—it does, indeed."

"My dear fellow," said Dutch, smiling, half in amusement, half in contempt, "I never did think any such thing."

"Then why do you look at me so?" continued Wilson, mildly. "You see," he said, with gathering enthusiasm, "I love Miss Studwick very dearly: but I seem to have no hope whatever. But why are you so angry?"

"There, there, there, don't talk about it," said Dutch, shaking the naturalist's hand. "These are matters one don't like to talk about."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Wilson, looking at him wistfully. "But you won't mention what I said?"

"As to your love confidences," said Dutch, smiling, "they are safe with me; but look here, Wilson, you are better as you are—better as you are."

"You think so, perhaps," said the young man; "but I do not. You are angry with Mrs. Pugh for something—that is all. She is very pretty, and perhaps she is a little imprudent," he added, simply.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Dutch, angrily. "Don't be cross with me, Mr. Pugh. Perhaps I am wrong."

"Speak! What do you mean?" exclaimed Dutch, panting.

"I only thought she might be more particular,

perhaps, as a lady, and not speak to the dark mulatto sailor."

"Have—have you seen her speaking to—to that man?" said Dutch, with his breath coming thick and short.

"Yes, I did last night," said Wilson; "but I did not mention it to any one else; and, of course, she was only doing it out of kindness, for she is very amiable."

"When—when was it?" panted Dutch, whose face flushed with shame and anger that he should be stooping to ask such questions.

"Just after dark, when you diving people were having your meal below. They parted, though, directly."

"Thanks. Say no more about this," said Dutch, more calmly. "Perhaps it looks a little imprudent; but, as you say, she is so amiable and kind to the men that her actions are easily misconstrued."

Dutch rose to go on deck, for the air in the cabin seemed to stifle him; but Wilson arrested his steps.

"But you will come if we have a shooting expedition, Mr. Pugh?" he exclaimed. "You have not been ashore yet, but spending your time over this dreadful treasure-hunting, when the treasures ashore are a thousand times more beautiful."

"I will see—perhaps—I cannot say," replied Dutch; and he stumbled on deck, to stand watching Rasp, who was busy over the air-pump, which he had taken all to pieces; but, as it was close upon dusk, he was collecting the various screws, and placing them loosely in their proper holes, before covering all over with a tarpaulin, to keep off the heavy night dew that hung in drops each morning from every rail.

The words of Wilson, the simple-hearted naturalist, had so troubled Dutch that his mind was once more in a whirl. Till then he had been gradually getting into a calm, resigned state, and accepting the inevitable; but now to hear such remarks as these about his wife's conduct was simply maddening him; and as he went and leaned over the side, gazing down into the pure water where the golden treasure lay, it was forgotten mostly in the trouble of his heart, and he made up his mind that he would see Hester, and demand some full explanation of her conduct, and so end this terrible suspense.

"I will know," he muttered; and as he rose he felt surprised at the lapse of time, for the short tropic twilight had given place to intense darkness while he had been brooding over his troubles, and now it occurred to him that he had not told Mr. Parkley about the gold.

"I'll see him now," he said; and he was turning to go to the cabin stairs when the low, musical voice of his wife fell upon his ear, and, though the darkness was so great that he could not see her, he was aware that she was close at hand, in conversation with some one whose voice seemed familiar.

He could not make out a word, but it was evident that whoever was speaking to Hester was addressing her in a low, passionate tone, while her replies were almost inaudible.

Who was it? Not the mulatto: his peculiar, harsh, grating voice was too familiar. This was the voice of some one who made his nerves thrill with rage

and indescribable emotion; and yet in his confusion and excitement he could not make out who it could be.

"I cannot play the spy like this," said Dutch to himself; and, raging as he was with curiosity and mortification, he walked away; but his agony was unbearable, and, turning back, he approached the spot once more, to hear a half-stifled cry for help; then there was the noise of a slight struggle, and he darted forward, to strike himself against the foremast, and stagger back half stunned, and lean against the side to collect his scattered thoughts.

For his forehead had come violently into collision with the mast, and for a few minutes memory forsook her seat, and a strange sense of sickness accompanied the oblivion.

This soon passed off, though; and now thoroughly roused, Dutch retraced his steps, going with outstretched hands to the spot whence the voices had seemed to proceed, to find all perfectly silent.

"But she was here," he muttered, moodily; and recalling his determination to insist upon a full explanation, Dutch walked straight to the cabin occupied by Bessy Studwick and his wife, and stood listening for a few moments before he knocked.

He could hear voices behind him, where it was evident that the captain and his friends were gathered, and upon listening more attentively he learned what he wished to know, but was never in any doubt about—namely, the presence of Hester in the little cabin.

She was there, though, for he heard some one talking in a low tone, and then there was a low sob.

He waited no longer, but knocked.

There was no reply.

He knocked again, and there was a rustling sound within which made his heart beat heavily, the blood rushed to his eyes, and a strange swimming affected his brain, as the horrible suspicion crossed his mind that it was not Bessy Studwick's voice he had heard, but the same that he had listened to on deck.

Fighting against the dizzy sensation, and striving to become calm, he raised his hands and stood in the attitude of one about to hurl himself against the door, and burst it from its fastenings; but something seemed to restrain him, and he knocked again; and this time plainly enough he heard Hester's voice, in an excited whisper, say—

"He is there! pray, pray, don't open the door."

It never occurred to Dutch that his wife could not know that it was he who knocked; for the hard jealousy that he had taken to his heart suggested and thought but evil of the woman he had sought to love and protect. It was not Bessy Studwick, then, who was with her, and they dared not open the door. He had given up before, and sought no revenge—this time he would have it if he died.

"Open this door," he said, in a low, deep whisper, full of the rage he felt; for in his mad cunning he told himself that if he raised his voice, or broke in the door, he would alarm the occupants of the other cabin.

There was a dead silence for a few moments, and he was about to make a fresh demand, as his hands clenched, and the veins in his forehead stood out throbbing, from the excess of his wild emotion.

"Will you open this door?" he hissed again, savagely, with his lips close to the panel.

"No," exclaimed a firm voice. "Make the slightest attempt to enter again, and I will alarm the ship."

Dutch Pugh's hands dropped to his side, and a sigh like a groan burst from his lips, as he staggered away on deck, and, going to the side, rested his aching head upon the rail.

"Am I mad?" he said to himself. "That was Bessy Studwick. Could it have been her I heard talking here on deck? No, that was impossible, for there was the struggle. Oh! Hester, Hester, my darling, forgive me if I am judging you wrongfully! I'd give my life to believe you true, and yet again to-night I am so ready to accuse you in my heart."

"It is of no use, I will not lead this life of hell upon earth; she must—she shall explain her conduct. There was some reason more than I know for her coming on board here. Her conversations with that mulatto. That meeting to-night. Ha! is it possible? Yes; I have it at last. Studwick was right: Lauré's influence is still with us. Bah! I believe I am half mad," he said, with a contemptuous ejaculation. "I will see her in the morning, and this trouble shall be cleared away."

As he spoke, he went down to the cabin he shared with the doctor, feeling lighter of heart for the resolution he had made, and telling himself that half his trouble might have been saved had he spoken to his wife. "She might even have come out of the trial unscathed," he said, with a strong feeling of elation; and, worn out mentally and bodily, he threw himself half-dressed into his berth, after opening the little window, for the heat was stifling.

"A good resolution at last," muttered Dutch as he laid his head upon his pillow; and as he dropped off to sleep listening to the lapping of the water against the schooner's side, the sound seemed to form itself into the repetition of the words—

"Too late, too late, too late!" until he fell into a heavy sleep.

CHAPTER XXIX.—HESTER'S TRIALS.

THAT evening for the second time, in obedience to a fierce demand from Lauré, Hester Pugh crept timidly on deck as soon as it was dark; and then, repenting of her venture, she was about to retreat, when she felt a grasp like steel clasp her wrist, and, in a low voice that made her shudder, Lauré began to upbraid her, speaking passionately of his love, and telling her it was his wish to win her by his tenderness and not by force; while she in turn told him of his cruelties, and piteously pleaded for mercy.

"Yes," he said at last, "the same mercy that you have had on me," and flinging his arms round her, he drew her shuddering form tightly to his breast. "Make a sound," he hissed in her ear, "and you slay Dutch Pugh, perhaps all here on board except my party. Be silent, and you shall be my happy, loving wife, a princess in wealth and station."

Maddened by her position, Hester struggled fiercely, and uttered a stifled cry for help, and at the same moment almost came the sound of approaching feet, followed by the sound of a blow;

and half fainting, she found herself loosened from the arms that held her, and ran, how she never knew, to her cabin, to fall exhausted into Bessy Studwick's arms.

"Lock the door, lock the door!" she panted, clinging tightly to her friend. "Oh, Bessy, Bessy, if I could but die!"

Bessy locked the door, and returned wondering to Hester's aide.

"Hester, darling, your husband must be a perfect monster," she cried, taking the sobbing woman in her arms.

"No, no, no," wailed Hester, "he is all that is good and noble and true, but he thinks me wicked."

"How dare he treat you like this, if he does!" cried Bessy, indignantly, as she smoothed Hester's dishevelled hair.

"No, no, no, it was not he," panted Hester.

"Not he?" exclaimed Bessy. "Do you mean to tell me that you have been on deck to meet some one else?"

"Yes, yes, and I am afraid—oh, I am afraid!" whispered Hester, with a shudder, as she clung more closely to her friend.

"Hester Pugh," said Bessy, gravely, and her voice sounded cold and strange—"you must explain this. I cannot wonder at poor Dutch's conduct, if you act like this."

"Bessy!" wailed Hester, clinging convulsively to her, "don't speak like that. Don't you turn from me too. I am innocent—I am innocent. Oh, that I were dead—that I were dead!"

"Hush, hush, hush!" whispered Bessy, trying to soothe her, for she was alarmed at the violence of her companion's grief. "Tell me all about it, Hester. Am I not worthy of your confidence?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes," sobbed Hester; "but I dare not—I dare not tell you."

"Dare not, Hester?"

"No, no, no," she moaned. "Hush! listen! he is there. Bessy," she whispered, clinging to her, "kill me, if you will; but do not let him touch me again."

As she whispered this appeal, there came Dutch's summons at the door, repeated again, with at last Bessy's stern reply, and then silence.

"He is gone," said Bessy at last, her own heart beating furiously with emotion.

"No, no, he is waiting," wailed Hester, clinging to her. "He is always watching me."

"Hester," said Bessy, sternly, "who is that man?"

"I dare not tell you," whispered Hester, with a shudder.

"As an old friend of your husband, I insist upon your telling me. This is cowardly weakness."

"Yes, yes, I know," wailed Hester, in her helpless misery; "but, for his sake, I dare not tell you."

"And you have not told your husband?"

"No."

"Has he asked you?"

"Yes—yes," sobbed Hester. "Oh, if I could but die!"

"Shame on you!" said Bessy. "Hester, I loved your husband very dearly once, and thought it all past now; and I have tried to love you for his sake."

I will not be a partner in this mystery. To-morrow morning he shall hear all I know."

"No, no, no," cried Hester, in affright. "You must not tell. For heaven's sake do not speak a word. Perhaps help may come."

"I shall tell him," said Bessy, firmly.

"You do not know what you say," wailed Hester, growing more pallid by the faint light of the lamp.

"I know a true, honest man is being deceived, and that some scoundrel has frightened his weak young wife into silence, and—"

She said no more, for Hester rose, horror-stricken, and threw herself upon her knees, imploring her silence; and then, utterly overcome by her emotion, fainted dead away.

So long continued was the swoon, that Bessy was about to summon assistance, when there was a faint sigh, and she revived.

"I was just going to send for Mr. Meldon," said Bessy, kindly, as she kissed her.

"That is not as you kissed me to-day, Bessy," said Hester, sadly. "I would tell you gladly—all—all, if I only dared."

She hid her face shudderingly, and then clinging tightly to Bessy, they remained silent for what must have been quite a couple of hours, when Bessy, who had been dozing off to sleep, suddenly started up, to find Hester awake and standing up in a listening attitude.

"What is it?" said Bessy, in alarm.

"Hush! do you not hear?" whispered Hester, hoarsely. "He is maddened, and has turned upon them. Oh, Dutch, my husband! God—protect—"

She said no more, but stood with white face and starting eyes, listening; for at that moment there was the sound of struggling overhead, a hoarse shriek of a man in mortal agony, a heavy fall—a rustling noise; and then just by the little round window of their cabin, a heavy splash.

CHAPTER XXX.—A RACE FOR LIFE.

THAT had been a tremendously hot day, but in the excitement of the silver-seeking the weather had been unnoticed; but as the night came on it seemed almost suffocating to those who were not moved by such passionate emotions as Dutch Pugh and his wife.

Sam Oakum had been till quite late standing chewing his tobacco, as he looked over the side, watching the golden green water that heaved gently against the stern of the vessel—for, moored as she was, she did not swing with the tide; and after a time he went and joined Pollo, whose galley was, after all, no hotter than the rest of the ship.

From where they sat talking in a low voice, the encounter between Lauré and Hester had not been heard; and when from time to time Oakum thrust out his head and took a look round, to see the faint glare of the cabin skylight, all was as still as death, and he drew his head in again, and went on talking.

"Don't gawp like that, Pollo," said Oakum, at last, as his companion yawned in a fashion that was quite shark-like.

"I berry sleep and tired, Mass' Oakum, sah; I had berry hot day."

"There, I'll soon wake you up, my lad."

"No, sah, I hope you do nuffum ob de sort, for I want go asleep."

Oakum chuckled softly to himself, and then, just as Pollo was in the midst of a second yawn, he said—

"I wonder how much a-piece the governors mean to give us?"

Pollo was wide awake on the instant.

"I no know, Mass' Oakum, sah; but dey get so much for demselves dat they give us great big whack."

"I dunno," said Sam. "We ought to have made a bargain. But there, let's go down and turn in."

"No, sah, I tank you," said Pollo; "it ten time more hot down below dere dan in my galley, where de fire full go. Nuff to cook all de boys in de forksel, and make 'em come up brown in de morning. I not bit sleepy now, and when I am, I lie down here on de deck and hab rest."

"Well, it is a bit better up here, Pollo, for you can breathe."

"Yes, sah; can get de wind nuff to keep going. But 'bout de silber, sah. You tink dey get up all down below?"

"Yes, Pollo; and I suppose we shall start next to get another sunken wreck, and unload her."

"I tink, sah, I take de schooner close up to dat old wreck off de lilly island."

"So do I, Pollo; and, what's more, I will."

"I tink, sah, we ought get bery big lot ob silber for ourself. If I tought dey turn shabby, I say let Mass' Oakum and me go and get de whole ob de oder ship, and cut de silber in two half, and take one a-piece."

"Very pretty, Pollo, if we could do it; but as we can't, let's be content with what we get from the governors."

"Yah, yah, yah, yah!" laughed Pollo, softly.

"Now, then, what are you grinning about?" said Oakum.

"I tink, sah, about de sunken ship and de silber."

"What of it?"

"I tink, sah, how funny it am if we came out here, find de sunk ship, pull up all de silber, and den if we go and lose de ship somewheres else, and all de silber go to de bottom again."

"I say, young fellow," growled Sam, "don't you get croaking like that. 'Taint lucky."

"No, sah; wouldn't be lucky lose all de silber again. I tink I know how much I go to hab for my share."

"Enough to make you an independent gentleman for life, Pollo."

"You tink so, sah?" chuckled Pollo.

"Sartin sure."

"Den I wear white hankcher and white wescoat ebry day; and make some darn nigger clean my boots free times over. Yah, yah, yah!"

"Here, I shall be smothered if I stop up here much longer, Pollo," said Oakum, stepping out upon the deck, where all was dark and silent, only a very faint light now coming up through the cabin skylight.

"It am hot, sah—berry hot," said Pollo; and they stood at the side, staring at the shore, where the undergrowth seemed to be lit up by a shower of fallen stars, which leaped and danced from leaf to

leaf, while the very sea beneath them seemed alive with pale shining points of light, which glided softly along till some fish darted through the water and made the little starry dots flash into a long line of light. Against the side of the ship there seemed to be so much pale golden light rising and falling, showing the copper sheathing of the vessel, and surrounding it with a soft halo which made its shape just faintly outlined from stem to stern. The cables, too, by which it was moored could be faintly traced, as lines of light illuminated and sparkled right to the sand below; and for some little time the two men stood watching in silence.

Songs of the London Streets.

MONMOUTH-COURT, Seven Dials, is about the last place in the world that would be selected as the home of the Muses, says the *Morning Post*. Euterpe and Calliope could scarcely walk there hand in hand, for the entrance is through a narrow passage which hardly admits two common mortals abreast. The only Castalian fountain is the gin-shop at the corner. The air is close and murky. Ragged children are fighting and screaming on the pavement. Miserable women are sitting on the thresholds, vainly endeavouring to quiet their squalling infants. There are many signs of squalid want, but none of picturesque poverty; and nobody would imagine that here takes place a large and continuous production of poetry—that this is perhaps the greatest verse factory in England.

It was at the beginning of the present century that a Scotch printer, named Catnach, established himself in a small shop in Monmouth-court, and began a trade in halfpenny songs, written for the most part by his own "bards," whom he paid sometimes in money—very little money—and more frequently in rum. Catnach seems to have been an enterprising man, and apt at gauging the public taste, and he soon found that the events of the day done into doggerel might be made to command a ready sale.

Through all the latter part of the Peninsular war and the time of Queen Caroline's trial he drove a roaring trade, and the Reform Bill agitation furnished material for a large number of what may by courtesy be called political skits. Celebrated trials, too, were put under contribution by the "bards," and no murderer worthy of the name expiated his crime without giving occasion for a "Last Dying Speech and Confession," which duly issued from the press in Monmouth-court. The business was a profitable one. Catnach made a considerable fortune out of the halfpence of the million, and his successor still flourishes, and still celebrates—often in many successive editions of ten thousand copies each—every event that stirs public feeling.

Such calamities as the foundering of the *Eurydice* or the collision between the *Princess Alice* and the *Bywell Castle* are put into some sort of rhyme at once, and the ballads are readily disposed of by hawkers, who generally sing or recite them to the poorest class of audience. Of the *Eurydice* verses over 120,000 copies have already been sold, and the demand has not ceased even yet. But this is

nothing as compared with the sale of some of the "gallows ballads." It is stated that the verses on Rush's murder—which purport, like most of this class, to be "written by the wretched culprit the night previous to his execution"—attained the enormous sale of 2,500,000 copies, and the "Manning murder" was equally productive. But the system of private executions has almost given a death-blow to the "gallows ballads."

Since the hanging of the five pirates of the *Flowery Land* in 1864, and the execution of Müller in the same year for the murder of Mr. Briggs on the North London Railway, this special department of verse-making has sadly languished; and no doubt the competition of the *Police News*, and of other cheap journals, has had its effect on the popularity of the Monmouth-court productions. Perhaps the march of education may soon improve this class of literature off the face of the earth, or at any rate impose upon it certain irksome rules of grammar and rhyme that would destroy its special features.

In the meantime, it will not be without interest to see what is the poetry of the million, and in what guise some of the events which make up the history of our century have been presented to certain classes of the population. Fletcher of Saltoun is reported to have said that if a man might make the ballads of a nation, he need not care who made the laws. If this be so, Monmouth-court ought to be a more important place than St. Stephen's; and there is no doubt that some of its productions are vastly more entertaining than even a Wednesday discussion in the House of Commons on the law of hypothec.

The early broadsheets are exceedingly curious. Nearly all are adorned with rough woodcuts, and not a few of these are the work of so celebrated an artist as Bewick, some of whose well-worn blocks seem to have been bought after his decease by Catnach, and to have been utilized in this way, without much respect to their subject. The Reform Bill ballads are, of course, all on the popular side, and Queen Adelaide generally comes off badly in them. Thus one ballad begins with a neat imputation of witchcraft:—

"The Tory lady may look with scorn,
And if she does not like Reform
She may get ready this glorious day,
Pack up her broom and bolt away."

And, again, we find in the "Reformers' Alphabet"—

"A was Adelaide, fallen in respect,
B a boroughmonger hung by the neck."

In the same precious production we are told that—

"L was a Lyndhurst who tripped up Grey,
Tried to hang Reform, and then ran away.
Grey, th' undaunted pilot that weathered the storm,
Crushed the Tories to atoms, and carried Reform."

It will be seen at once that the rhymes are such as would only be tolerable to an uneducated ear. It is possible that we lose something of the enjoyment of our youth when we begin to be fastidious about these matters. Up to the age of four or five years we failed to detect any cacophony in the lines—

"Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock."

And we accepted such rhymes as "top" and "rock," just as we thought it a matter of course that "water" should pair off with "after" in the celebrated history of the expedition of Jack and Jill. We know that this sort of muddlement is by no means confined to nursery rhymes. Every hymn-book is especially rich in it; and even in the popular "Hymns Ancient and Modern," we find that "Redeemer" rhymes with "remember," "power" with "cure," "blood" with "flowed," "proclaim" with "Bethlehem," "peace" with "righteousness," and so on. But there is no doubt that the muse of Seven Dials beats all other professors of cacophony into fits. We have already seen that "scorn" pairs off with "reform," and "neck" with "respect;" and we might multiply indefinitely similar instances of want of delicacy of ear. Still, what do these niceties matter? We find real stuff in some of these ballads; and just as the heroine in "School" declares that "true love is superior to orthography," so we discover that the purveyors of patriotism, sentiment, and sensationalism for the masses are superior to the trammels which ordinary poets impose on themselves.

The recent Russo-Turkish war does not appear to have given much material to the bards of Seven Dials, and we have only one specimen of a composition on this subject. This is a stirring call to arms, in which we are bidden to—

"Remember the Alma and many more,
Our sons are as good now as then;
We will thrash them again as we have done before,
We shall boast we are Englishmen:
Let this be the cry, we'll conquer or die
For the honour and the flag of old England."

Going farther back, however, we find that the Crimean war was prolific in ballads. Florence Nightingale appears as the heroine in most of them, and while—

"On a dark lonely night on Crimea's dread shore
There had been bloodshed and strife on the morning
before,

the appeal to the soldier is—

"So forward, my lads, may your hearts never fail,
You're cheered by the presence of a sweet Nightingale."

And again—

"The soldiers all say she's an angel from heaven;
Sing praise to this woman, deny it who can,
And all woman was sent for the comfort of man."

Lord Palmerston was a favourite hero of the street singers. His career furnished them with plenty of incident, and when it ended a border of black fringed the broad sheet, which told—

"He was born in October, seventeen eighty-four,
That good, able statesman, who now is no more."

And which described her Majesty's grief at learning the news—

"Then she said, my good statesman,
Alas! is no more,
Lord Palmerston's gone
To that still silent bourne,
To his Queen and his country
He can never return."

The bard of the streets is more charitable than the newspaper of culture which argued that heaven must be a different place from that pictured by our divines if the gay and gallant Palmerston could find a place there:—

"We hope now Lord Palmerston
To glory is gone,
The twentieth day of October
He was just eighty-one."

Similarly we are informed with regard to Robert Stephenson, the engineer, that "up aloft he has gone, never more to return;" while "Tom Sayers is gone to the silent bourne, where he must lay till the Judgment Day." In truth, it is on mournful occasions that the bard wings his highest flights, as when he asserts that—

"The life of a man is no more than a span;
He flourishes here as a flower;
We are here to-day, and to-morrow we're gone,
We're all of us gone in an hour."

The collision between the *Avalanche* and the *Forest* furnishes a suitable theme. We hear how the *Avalanche* "sailed proudly down the Channel," and how—

"The hearts in that ship, they were thinking of home,
As onward they dashed through the fast-flying foam."

And then—

"All had gone well till near nine o'clock,
When a collision occurred (*sic*) with a terrible shock,
A vessel named *Forest*, oh! cut her in two,
And the *Avalanche* went down, passengers and crew."

It is evident that the bard is a man of resource, and throws in an "Oh!" when necessary to eke out his metre. Often, too, he ends his line with a word which is too obviously put there merely for the sake of the rhyme, as when he tells us that the *Princess Alice*—

"On her return journey from Southend and Sheerness,
Was run into and sunk in five minutes or less,
By a large iron screw collier, *Bywell Castle*, they say,
That was going down the river that fatal day."

It is not likely that the poet had much doubt as to the name of the "large iron screw collier," but he interjects "they say" for the sake of the "fatal day," which roundly ends his stanza. Both these collision ballads are adorned with the same startling woodcut, representing a ship foundering in a terrific storm, with formidable rocks in the background, to which a number of ladies with elegant busts and luxuriant hair are gaily swimming. The *Eurydice* ballad has a much more appropriate picture, which, with a slight effort of imagination, may serve for the coast where the catastrophe took place, but which has probably served on similar occasions. It is curious that this, which has been the most popular of recent productions of the kind, is perhaps the most wretched of all in a literary point of view. From the beginning, where we learn that—

"Off Dunnose coast she there went down,
Three hundred souls, alas! are drowned,"

to the concluding enumeration of the survivors—

"That able seaman, Cuddiford by name,
And Sydney Fletcher, all that now remain,"

the composition seems to be quite devoid of merit, and not even to possess that rough vigour of graphic narrative which might compensate for the want of any gleam of pathetic or poetical expression. And yet an author who has sold off an edition of 120,000 must really possess some quality which is appreciated by the masses, though not recognizable by an ordinary critic.

There has been such a dearth of home politics in recent years, that the press of the Seven Dials has produced few new ballads of this class. We are assured, indeed, that one member of Parliament is exceedingly fond of throwing his opinions into a poetical form, and getting them diffused among the lower classes in this fashion. It is stated, however, that his productions, though sold at a halfpenny each, do not command such a brisk sale as those of more practised, if less cultivated, writers. But Sir Stafford Northcote might perhaps get some hints for his next budget from the ballad of "John Bull and the Taxes," in which we learn that—

"They are going to tax the butter,
And they're going to tax the eggs,
They're going to tax the pork-pie hats
And tax the wooden legs;
They're going to tax the bachelors,
Tax petticoats and breeches,
They'll tax the barrel-organs,
And Gladstone's cards and speeches."

"Little Johnny Russell," to whom one of the writers familiarly appeals as "O, dearly-bought-and-never-to-be-forgotten Johnny," is the hero or the villain of many a ballad. One of them is prefaced by a "Reformer's Catechism" in prose, in which the Premier of 1866 is put through his facings somewhat rigorously. To the question, "What is your name?" he is made to answer, "Weathercock Johnny, *alias* Jack the Reformer," and he is advised to "Amend his ways, which are in a most shaky condition," to "take a few of Palmerston's Pills (*sic*) to invigorate his political system," to "stick up for the people, and speak up according to his size as long as he remains in office," while Mr. Gladstone is bidden to "keep his weather-eye open, and jog the memory of his fellow servant John, so as to guide his little feet if he should chance to stray from the right path." The "People's William" used to be another hero among our bards, and one of his budgets furnished the solitary joke which we have detected in this class of literature:—

"He's taken taxes off the Tea,
P'raps next he won't tax U."

Oddly enough, his atrocity agitation does not seem to have been celebrated in verse, or if it has we have not been fortunate enough to procure a copy. Mr. Lowe with his Match Tax, and Mr. Ayrton with his Park Regulations, alike roused the bards to a pitch of savage indignation; but the Tories, though by no means favourites in Monmouth-court, do not appear to have individually excited popular hatred.

The street ballads which command a steady sale, independent of the events of the day, are for the most part rather dull productions. The poacher, the gipsy, and the smuggler are their prominent figures, and the betrayed maiden is constantly pro-

claiming her woe. Dashing damsels of the "Billy Taylor" order follow their true loves to sea; nobles of high degree wander in disguise and woo village beauties; the ploughman sings the charm of straight furrows, and the penitent deserter moans his miserable plight. Bravest of heroines is the "Female Smuggler," who shoots the commodore through the body, is captured after heroic resistance, is arraigned before the judge and jury, and only escapes "punishment condign" by the intercession of her victim. Of course the result is that—

"I shall be happy for evermore
With my female smuggler, says the commodore."

On the other hand, platitudinous ditties of lofty moral sentiment seem to find much favour. We read of "The green lane at home, With church bells ringing sweetly, Where Lucy used to come, And kiss me very neatly." We are told to "Love your neighbour as yourself, but paddle your own canoe," to "'List to a mother's dying words," to "Face the world bravely (*sic*), nor yield to despair," to "Share our last crust with the bloke that we love," and to adopt many excellent pieces of advice of the same kind.

If it cannot be said that this sort of literature is absolutely devoid of coarseness and profanity, we must allow that, on the whole, it is singularly free from both. The usual remuneration of the poet is a shilling and six dozen copies, and there are a few authors who confine themselves to their own compositions, which they bawl in every street in the East-end, sometimes disposing of as many as 300 songs in a single day at a halfpenny, or on exceptional occasions even a penny, each. We may have something to say on a future occasion as to these and other artists of the London streets; at present we must be content with having called attention to a literature which stands by itself, and which forms the pabulum of a very large class of the population.

OPENING THE WINDOW.—It requires six men, according to an American paper, to put up a car-window. A young lady gets in, and having sat in her seat for about five minutes, she turns and requests the gentleman just beside her to perform that service. This is a near-sighted individual, who peers round the window-frame some time for the catch, and then—of course the window sticks—jerks his finger-nail half off, and sits down with a red face, amid the giggling of the passengers opposite. Next, the man on the other side of the young lady puts his lavender-coloured knees on a paper of cherries beside him, clutches at the knob, and finally falls over in the young lady's lap. The cause of all this misery now remarks that "it doesn't matter," and then smiles sweetly at a pale young man with long hair. The martyr turns white, rises, and buttons up his coat for the death struggle. On the eleventh pull he bursts a blood-vessel somewhere, and goes outside. A simple-minded mechanic now comes forward with his tool bag, from which he takes a crowbar. Just when he is about to use this the conductor comes in, and slides the window airily up with a gentle turn of the wrist.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER I.—"IT WAS A NARROW ESCAPE FOR YOU."

"BY Jove, Frank, you grow lazier every day! How you can sit still there writing letters, and not even ask what the news is that is causing so much excitement, I don't know."

"Well, what's it all about?" asked the young man addressed, removing his cigar from his lips, and throwing himself back in his chair, beside which stood a table spread with writing materials. "I had found a nice corner here, where between the tent and the trees there seems little chance of the sun finding me out at present; and you don't suppose I was going to turn out, and broil myself again, because there was a confusion of tongues going on. I knew you would come and tell me if anything was up, and it seems I was right."

"The report we heard two days ago as to the niggers rising is confirmed."

"What an excitable chap you are, Rob! Do sit down and talk about it quietly. The fellows ought to call you Fireworks, because you are always fizzing and going off about nothing. Depend upon it, it's all bosh, for even supposing a few sepoys were to turn vicious, and make a disturbance, it would be put down directly."

"Who by?" asked the other, an erect, military-looking man of thirty, as he took the chair brought him by a native servant, and began to smoke.

"Who by? Why, the native troops, of course. For ten disaffected, there would be at least a thousand trustworthy. My dear Vaughan, what is the good of croaking. It will be time enough for that when there is real danger; and then I shall be as ready to face it as any one."

"I don't doubt that, Frank. I may be fidgety, perhaps; but I cannot help thinking about Dora. She was to be here next week; and, whatever we hear, it is too late to stop her now. If all these rumours be true, the country is not safe to pass through."

A cloud came over Frank Morley's brow, and he puffed away in silence.

"There is another thing about it," said Vaughan. "Should we have some fighting now, your marriage will have to be put off. But there, I acknowledge I am looking at the worst side of things, and I have made you anxious about my sister. I ought to have known you would be worrying enough about her without that. Heigho! you're a lucky fellow, Morley, to have won your prize, and to be able to wear it almost when you will. I envy you."

"This means, then, that you have discovered that there are drawbacks to single blessedness. It is not difficult to guess who has taught you."

"I suppose not."

"Have you proposed? Is anything settled?" asked Morley, eagerly.

"No," said the other, with a sigh.

Frank Morley's face showed an expression of relief.

"Frank, if, as I am disposed sometimes to fear, the rising should be general, you and I shall each have a thought to nerve our arms in danger—the thought that there is one in particular to watch over and protect; that on our courage may depend the safety of those dearest to us in the world. And there is no one to whom I would so soon have seen my dear little sister married as to you. We were like brothers before, and shall be so in earnest now. Whatever comes, you and I, should we have to face the enemy side by side, will fight for each other to the death."

He held out his hand, and after a minute's hesitation, during which a struggle seemed to take place in his mind, Frank Morley clasped it warmly.

"Yes," he said, slowly, "there is no doubt about that. Here comes the colonel."

As he spoke, a tall, stern-looking officer of forty-five approached them, with some despatches in his hand.

He addressed himself to Robert Vaughan.

"Captain Vaughan, come with me to my tent. I have bad news for you."

As they walked together down the line of white tents, Captain Frank Morley, who had risen, remained watching them till the colonel raised the flap of his tent and entered, followed by Vaughan. "Now he will see her again," he muttered, as he turned back to his table, and, sitting down, leaned his head on his hand. "Honest, true-hearted fellow as he is, sometimes I almost hate him. He trusts me and confides in me, till I feel like a villain, and know that if he could read my heart he would despise me. There, I will think no more of Mabel; I must teach myself to think of her as his. Mad, blind idiot that I was, to bind myself to that poor confiding child in England. And now she is coming out—will be here next week; and how can I meet her? Mabel, Mabel, I would to heaven I had never seen you! This wild, hopeless love is making me forget honour, friendship—everything."

He started up, and, gathering together his papers, went into the tent, to throw himself into a chair, and cover his face with his hands. A quarter of an hour passed, and he was roused by a hand being laid on his shoulder.

"Are you ill, old fellow?" said Vaughan.

"No, thanks. What was the colonel's news?"

"Bad, very bad. The sepoys are still rising, and orders have come from head-quarters that we are to move on toward Chutnegunj."

"When?"

"The day after to-morrow, at latest. The colonel and Mrs. Stafford are both much concerned about it on Dora's account, as it makes it longer before she can join us; but there is nothing to be done. However, there is still hope that she may arrive before we start. The accounts of what the blacks are doing in some parts are positively awful; but no doubt there is a good deal of exaggeration. These things always grow as they come. I wish she had not come out."

"So do I, with all my heart," said Morley, fervently.

"But there is no help for it now, unfortunately. Who could have imagined there was any fear of a

breaking out here? Come, it's no use worrying, let's go in to tiffin."

Arm in arm the two young captains strolled towards the mess tent, where their brother officers and men had already assembled—for it was two o'clock—all grumbling about the heat, and speculating on the probability of being in action soon, the latter with a satisfaction that would seem only to belong to the certainty of coming out of it scatheless.

"Hallo!" said a young ensign, whose downy moustache had only just begun to grow, "here come the two captains, not at loggerheads yet about a certain young lady."

"They never will be," said his next neighbour, whose words, though lowered in tone, were plainly heard by those of whom they spoke. "Don't you know Captain Morley is to marry Vaughan's sister, and that she is coming to join us directly?"

Vaughan looked at his friend and laughed as they took their seats at the mess table, and was surprised to see a red flush of anger overspreading his countenance.

"There, man, never look put out for a little chaff. But you are out of sorts, and no wonder. However, I don't think we shall do any good by worrying about it. She will be with us safely in a day or two."

He spoke more cheerfully than he felt, in a desire to remove in part the impression his former words had made on his friend; but in vain. Frank continued to look gloomy and depressed, and drank rather freely of brandy pawnee. Tiffin concluded, he declined Vaughan's invitation to join him in a cigar, and wandered away by himself in the shade of the palm tope in which they were encamped.

"So it seems that we are to make a move at last," said the young ensign before mentioned, whose name was Harry Payne—a tall, fair youth, who promised in a few years' time to make one of those deep-chested, Saxon-looking men, energetic, honest, and thoroughly English, after a little more experience, and when a little of the conceit should be knocked out of him. "A thundering good thing, too, I think. I'm sick of dawdling away existence as we've been doing lately; nothing to do but melt and stew all day long. Even a tiger in the neighbourhood would have been a relief. I don't believe you'd feel the heat half so much if you had something to do."

This was when a few of the men and the junior officers had taken their chairs into the shadow of the mess tent, to lounge, smoke, and chat the time away. Captain Vaughan, who had joined them, looked half sadly at the boy, for he could scarcely be called a man.

"Ah, my lad," he said, "you don't know what the horrors of war are, or you would not be so delighted that there seems a prospect of some fighting. I am much afraid you will soon have more excitement than you like."

"Well, I hope I sha'n't turn coward when it comes to the point," said Payne, laughing. "I might run away if I had only myself to think of, but I would fight for you till I dropped, sir," he concluded, earnestly.

"Thank you, my lad, I believe you would," said Robert Vaughan, smiling at the ensign's enthusiasm; and with a nod he strolled away.

"There goes the bravest officer and truest gentleman in the service," said Payne, as he disappeared.

"How does he know he's brave?" said one of the men who overheard him. "He hasn't seen him in action."

"By jingo," continued the ensign, "Miss Stafford isn't so sensible as she looks if she doesn't have him—that's all I've got to say."

"Don't believe it is," growled the man who had spoken before, to his companion. This man, Sergeant Davis, was popularly supposed to be the ugliest man in the regiment, for which reason he was distinguished by the nickname of Handsome Dick. His chief characteristic was a general one-sidedness, his nose inclining to one side, his mouth to the other, and his eyes being anything but a pair. "He never finishes what he's got to say."

"Eh, what's that you say, Davis?"

"Said I quite agree with you, sir," responded the sergeant, as he refilled his pipe.

"Well, you should speak plainer," said the young man, laughing. "I thought you said something quite different."

Bang! bang!

The sound of a gun from the opposite side of the tope made all start up and look at each other blankly, till Payne set off at a run in the direction whence the sound proceeded, followed by most of the others—Davis, however, remaining to possess himself of his piece, when he started in pursuit with a military trot.

The ensign had not gone far before he met Captain Morley coming towards him, rifle in hand.

"What was it?" he asked, breathlessly.

"A tiger," said Frank, coolly, though his eyes flashed with excitement. "I missed, and perhaps all the better for me that I did. If I had wounded him, the beast might have sprung instead of slinking quietly away in the long grass as he did."

"And you were alone? How lucky that you had your rifle! It was a narrow escape for you."

The young fellow turned quite pale at the thought as he walked back beside the captain, the others dispersing as they found there was nothing going on.

"Shouldn't wonder if it was only a jackal, after all," muttered Sergeant Davis.

"Did you speak, sergeant?"

"I said I shouldn't wonder if there's a tiger hunt to-morrow," said Davis, mendaciously.

"That's one of Handsome Dick's fibs," said Private Brown to Private Smith. "If ever he speaks the truth by accident, he alters it directly after into a lie."

"Here, I've been grumbling like fun lately," said Payne to Captain Morley, "because it's so awfully slow out here, and now there are two things in one day—first, the news that we are to march in two days, and then that a tiger has been seen. If there is a treat I have always longed after, it is to join in a tiger hunt. What shall you do about it?"

"Report to the colonel," said Morley, decidedly. "Under other circumstances, I dare say he would allow a hunt to be organized; but as we are not to stop here, I don't suppose he will now."

The other looked disappointed.

"Don't you?"

"Never mind, my lad. It is not unlikely that ere long we may be hunting tigers of a different kind, quite as bloodthirsty and treacherous as this one; and then you will have plenty of opportunities to show what you are made of. From what I have heard to-day, I greatly fear it; but Heaven grant I may be wrong, for the sake of the poor women."

Colonel Stafford listened with much interest to the account Captain Morley gave him of his adventure, but shook his head at the conclusion.

"I see what you want, Morley, but it is out of the question. It might have been different had any one been hurt; but, under the circumstances, I cannot have men and elephants tired by a hard day's work to-morrow, when they will have to be on the march at two the next morning."

"At two, did you say, sir?"

"Yes; I hope to put some distance between us and this place before sunrise. And take my advice, my dear boy—don't go for any more solitary walks while we are here, because I can't afford to lose a good officer."

Frank left the tent, and walked towards his own, when he encountered Vaughan, apparently looking for him.

"My dear Frank," said his friend, taking his arm, and walking by his side, "you are sure you are not hurt? Payne told me you were not, but I wanted to see for myself. Thank Heaven for it. You must be less rash, for Dora's sake."

CHAPTER II.—"FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, LET ME ALONE."

THE sun had just set, and the scorching heat of the day was over for the time. He was scarcely out of sight, and the short twilight of India had not yet given place to darkness, when the colonel's wife and daughter walked slowly among the trees near their tent, enjoying the cool air after the long hours of stifling heat. The older lady was erect and severe-looking, though she could smile pleasantly enough on people she liked, the rule being that those who were so favoured admired and respected her, while those she disliked almost invariably returned the feeling with interest. Her daughter resembled her in the straightness of her figure, though the beautiful rounded features and varying expression were as different as possible to the straight, hard nose and firmly-closed mouth of Mrs. Stafford.

"I wish Dora were here," said Mabel, with a sigh. "Papa has enough to think about in his position, without having the added anxiety of doubts about her safety."

"Safety?" said her mother, sharply—"the girl is as safe as if she were in England. No one will meddle with her."

"But they say, mamma, that many women and children have—"

"They say! Why, Mab, if your father were to make a practice of ill-treating and brutally using all the natives in his employ, and the native soldiers as well, isn't it very likely the poor creatures would rise against him in time, and try and revenge themselves for all they had suffered? That is how it has been in these cases we hear about. Now, your father has

always treated them well; therefore we have nothing to fear, either for ourselves or any one connected with us."

"I wish I could feel so, too," sighed Mabel; "but I cannot help feeling nervous when I see how serious papa, and Captain Morley, and Captain Vaughan look about it."

"Well, as for that, Robert always thinks as your father does. I never knew any point yet on which they did not agree."

"Lovely evening, isn't it, Mrs. Stafford?" said Morley, joining them. "Quite a cool air."

"Yes, it's rather too cool for me, Captain Morley. I am going in."

"You will stay a few minutes longer, Miss Stafford?" he said, eagerly. "It is not nearly dark yet."

"A very few, then," said Mabel, smiling. "I do so enjoy this time of the day, when it is not sultry and oppressive. Nights of that kind make me feel as though something were going to happen."

Morley did not speak at once, for a struggle was going on in his breast between love and honour, and he tried hard to fight down the passion that strove for expression in words. When he spoke, his voice trembled slightly, and Mabel, noticing it, ascribed it to thoughts of Dora, never suspecting the truth.

"Do you put any faith in these ugly rumours that keep reaching us?" he asked.

"I fear there must be a groundwork of truth, but I allow for a great deal of exaggeration. I do not think you—we—need dread anything for Miss Vaughan, as there has not been any news to be depended upon of rising in the parts she would cross."

Frank set his teeth, and determined not to contradict the impression she had—that he was distracted with anxiety for her friend's sake.

"You are silent to-night, Captain Morley," she said, a few minutes later, as he was still unable to command himself sufficiently to speak in an indifferent tone. "I hear you had an adventure this afternoon."

"Nothing worth calling by that name. The animal was cowardly by daylight, and made off at the sight of me."

"I have often thought lately," said Mabel, earnestly, "that we poor weak women, who are utterly useless in dangerous times, could not have braver defenders than we have around us here. I should not fear for myself were enemies about us, but only for the brave men who I know would give their lives in our service, were it necessary."

"Thank you. But you should not call yourself useless. It is a woman's duty to nurse those wounded in protecting her. I would willingly be at death's door, to be nursed back to life by you."

"I must go into the tent now," said the girl, after a minute of startled silence, for she was quite taken by surprise at the tone of the last few words. "Good night!"

"Good night!" said Frank, with an effort; and he held her hand in his for a moment, then dropped it, when she took a step towards the door of the colonel's tent, which was not many yards from where they stood. She glanced back at him, and the moon,

which, now that the sun had gone to rest, had risen early to take his duties upon herself, shed a soft light on the fair, rounded outline of the girl's face, encircled by a scarf-like shawl of some thin woollen material, which she had thrown round her when she came out. Morley looked at her, and all his resolves were scattered to the winds on the instant.

"Stay a minute, Miss Stafford," he said, hoarsely. "I have something to say to you."

She came back slowly, and looked at him with a doubtful, wondering expression.

"What is it?" she asked, after a few minutes, silence, during which he had remained with eyes bent on the ground.

"Heaven help me, I love you more than life!"

It was a strangely worded declaration; and the colonel's daughter looked first startled, then indignant.

"You, Captain Morley? What can you be thinking of? Are you not engaged to Dora Vaughan?"

"Yes, I am," he said, speaking excitedly, but all hesitation quitting his manner now that the step was taken; "but hear me for a minute, Mabel, before you judge me as hardly as you look disposed to do. I fancied I cared for her when I saw her two years ago in England; but as soon as I saw you I knew I had been mistaken, and I love you now with the one deep love of a lifetime. Speak, can you not return it, Mabel? Am I nothing to you?"

She could not fail to be moved by his tone, and her voice trembled as she answered, gently—

"You forget yourself, and insult me, in addressing such words as these to me. I have always thought of you as bound to her. She will be here in a day or two, and then the old feeling will return, and this madness be forgotten."

"Madness! Is it madness to love you, to feel that I would die for you? Perhaps it is, but I cannot help it. I have fought against it continually for weeks, only to find it impossible to keep silence longer; for the more I struggle against it, the more it grows upon me."

"But think of your promised word, your honour as a soldier and a gentleman."

"Do you suppose I have not thought of it?" he said, almost fiercely. "No, do not go," he exclaimed, catching her hand as she retreated. "Tell me, Mabel, if I were free, what would your answer be?"

"It would be 'No,' most decidedly. Captain Morley, I have always thought of you as a friend, and shall always do so; but never in any different way. I am very, very sorry for you, but I am sure of this. Forget that you have spoken. Good night."

He let fall her hand; whereupon she glided away, looking back ere she entered the tent to where he still stood, with bared head, in the moonlight.

"I cannot give up," he muttered. "If she did but know it, every gentle, pitying word increases the strength of the chain that holds me. Mad! Yes, I am mad, and incurably."

He walked aimlessly here and there amongst the tents, not heeding the curious looks of the sentries, who stared as he passed and repassed them, absently gazing into the glowing wood fires, or fixing his eyes on the dark shades in amongst the trees, till sparks of fire danced before them.

It was late, and nearly all the encampment was asleep, when he at length lifted the flap of the tent shared between him and Vaughan, to find the latter still sitting by the table, reading.

"You are late, Frank," said he, looking up; "I would not go to bed, because I wanted to have a chat with you. What have you been doing?"

"Trying to walk off my headache," said Frank, wearily, as he threw himself into a chair. "Put off the talk till the morning, there's a good fellow."

"I thought there was something wrong with you this morning. Now, look here, we can't have you laid up, and especially now that we are just going to march. Come round with me at once, and we'll ask Miller to prescribe for you."

"No, no; he could do me no good."

"No good! I tell you what it is, my boy, Miller's a very clever man—one in a hundred, I think. If you prefer it, I will fetch him here."

"Hang Miller! There, I'm out of sorts, Rob; don't take any notice of me—go to bed. I shall be all right to-morrow."

"I'm afraid it's thinking about Dora has upset you, old fellow," said the other, laying his hand on his friend's affectionately; but Frank's was quickly withdrawn.

"But it is nothing of the kind," said the young man, sharply. "For heaven's sake, let me alone."

"I am sure he is ill," said Rob to himself, as he took up his book, with the intention of seeking his charpoy. "I never knew him disagreeable before. He shall see Miller in the morning if he isn't better."

He was moving away, when Morley stopped him.

"Wait a minute, Vaughan. I believe I'm a scoundrel, but I won't be a humbug."

"What has come to you to-night, Frank, that you are talking so wildly? If it were any one else, I should say he had been putting an enemy into his mouth, and so on."

"I'm desperately, passionately, hopelessly in love, Robert Vaughan."

"That is no news to me. I guessed she was at the bottom of it."

"Let me finish—in love with Mabel Stafford."

There was a dead silence, broken at last by Vaughan.

"I cannot stand jesting on that subject," he said, sternly.

"Look at me. Do I look in a jesting humour?"

"You mean to tell me—"

"That I love her, and have told her so."

Vaughan staggered back as though he had received a thrust from a knife.

"And my sister?" he said, at last, in a voice unlike his own.

"Is nothing to me."

Another pause ensued, during which Vaughan stood with eyes fixed in a confused, half-stunned way on the man he had called his friend, and then with a groan he turned to the tent-door.

"Stop, where are you going?" said Morley, starting up. "Say something first, if it be only that you despise me."

"Despise you!" said Rob, in a low tone. "Keep back, coward. To-morrow you shall know what I

think of the man who could deceive an innocent, trusting girl."

He made a motion with his hand to where his sword and pistols were hung as he spoke, and then went out into the moonlight. Morley sank back into his chair, and mentally viewed his position. He had forfeited the regard—nay, made an enemy—of the man who had trusted and confided in him; and all, it seemed, for nothing. But, at the same time, he felt in a measure relieved that the truth was out; for of late he had dreaded being alone with Vaughan, who spoke so often of the approaching connection between them. However, Vaughan had implied an intention of calling him out on the morrow to answer for his conduct, while he would almost prefer to bear the imputation of coward that would attach itself to his name should he refuse to appear than do so. One course of conduct suggested itself to him—to entreat Vaughan to say nothing of all this to his sister, to keep her for ever in ignorance that she had been replaced in his heart, and to marry her as soon as possible after her arrival. But Mabel's image interfered with any such project; for he felt that, in spite of her decisive words, he could not banish hope from his heart till she became Vaughan's wife.

He had been sitting in the same posture, with bent head and knitted brows, for he knew not how long, when he was suddenly roused by a piercing cry from no great distance, followed by another and another. He ran out, and was surprised to find that the moon had set, and all was very dark, save where the camp fires sent a red glow on to the trees that were near. There was a moment of weird stillness, and then all was noise and confusion—men rushing out of their tents, rifle or pistol in hand, as the cry of "Tiger" was raised, and passed from mouth to mouth, the dark figures of the native servants and camp followers seeming to start up from the ground in every direction, to join their cries to the rest, as they ran here and there in an objectless fashion.

Morley hurried forward towards the place from whence the first scream had seemed to proceed, asking first one and then another what had happened; but finding for some time that no one knew more than he did himself. At last, however, he learned that one of the sentries on duty had been startled by a rustling amongst the bushes, immediately followed by the spring of some dark body right on to the spot where two or three of the coolies lay sleeping close to a fire. There was a fearful scream, and the tiger retreated, dragging with him one of these men by his head, which he held in his terrible jaws. The light from the fire was sufficient to show this, but it was impossible to shoot at the beast for fear of hitting the man.

Frank shuddered at this account was furnished him by Ensign Payne, who had been first on the spot.

"But the man was mad not to fire," he said the next minute. "We cannot follow in this darkness, and a shot might have saved the poor wretch, while if he had killed him, surely that would have been better than being torn to pieces. It's awful—horrible!"

"True," said Payne, as they walked back, side by

side. "But you could hardly expect the sentry to think of that, and I don't fancy there would be much chance for the poor devil, when his head had once been in the grip of those fangs. Well, after this, I should think we shall have the elephants out, and then—well, it will be odd if the man-eater does not get a few bullets in his skin."

Snipe-shooting in Canada.

THE first of September brings gladness to the heart of the sportsman, for on that day snipe, woodcock, and partridge shooting commences, and the woods and beaches are resonant with the sound of the fowling-piece, the whistle of sportsmen, and the barking of cockers, and the proprietors of sportsmen's resorts prepare their *salons* and their *chambers à coucher* for the *messieurs de ville*. The fierce rays of the summer sun are somewhat tempered, and one feels in the early morning and evening twilight a suspicion of coming cold. The fields have been shorn of their waving crops, and the green leaves of the maple, the birch, the beech, and the oak have changed to pink, to purple, to orange, to brown, and in fact to all the colours of the rainbow, while fruit trees luxuriate in myriads of blue and white plums, and rosy and russet-coloured apples.

It was in the afternoon, a few days ago, when myself and friend, seated in a four-wheeled dog-cart, laden with the complement of fowling-pieces, ammunition, and the superficial edibles and drinkables not procurable in country villages, and drawn by a strong Norman pacer, whose steps varied not on the level road or on the ascent or descent of hill, drawn over the Dorchester Bridge, leaving the city of Quebec, with its countless tin-covered roofs and mountain-pitched edifices, behind, to pass a day or so at the village of Chateau Richer, and try our luck at snipe-shooting on its famous far-stretching beach. Quietly smoking our cigars, while our two pointers contentedly lay at our feet, we could not help feeling some of the enjoyability of life, which now and then repays one for its ups and downs, its disappointments and its cares, its losses and reverses.

We passed through the village of Beauport, with its whitewashed lime-stone, vertically twisted cottages on each side of the road cropping up one after the other for miles. Down to the right swept majestically past the great St. Lawrence, laving in its waters the base of the rock-built city of the heights of Levis and the shores of the Isle d'Orleans. On this village site, nearly one hundred and twenty years ago, the brave Wolfe was defeated by the chivalrous Count de Levis, with the loss of several hundreds of men in killed and wounded. The English afterwards revenged the defeat by carrying sword and fire through all the villages of the north, from Beauport down.

Soon we passed over the rushing, seething Montmorency River, and from the bridge we saw the fleecy cloud of misty spray rising upward from the falls, not far down, and were almost deafened by the continuous roar of the dashing waters. As we hastened on, the sound gradually receded, and we found ourselves surrounded by orchards of apples and plum trees, whose freighted branches stretched

across the road, forming an archway from which we could pick the most delicious fruits. Delightful cottages and farm-houses, near which were barns, milk-houses, and bakehouses, dotted the side views, and the village of L'Ange Gardien, with its parish church, whose bell was sounding the Angelus, came into view, and was passed to give place to more extended views of orchards, forests, towering mountains on one side, and receded declines and river view, bounded by the fertile pastures of the Isle d'Orleans, on the other. It was getting dusk as we approached the village of Chateau Richer, but we could recognize remembered places of former visits, and, as we rapidly passed the church, we could feel assured that we had not many yards more to drive before we could be certain of comfortable lodging and hearty welcome at the house of Mr. Pierre Garneau.

We were not unexpected, for a telegram had informed our host of our intention, and he was waiting with his lantern lit to unload our vehicle and put up our horse, whose trot for fifteen miles did not seem to fatigue him in the least; his *bonne femme* had aired the beds, put the rooms in order, and soon had a good substitute for dinner in the shape of fowls, eggs, potatoes, toast, coffee, and tea. The little *et ceteras* we had brought from the city rendered everything complete, and ensured for us a comfortable and pleasant evening. After satisfying our hunger, and putting our things ship-shape, we sat down to hear the news of the beach from our host, who cheered our hopes by his reports of abundance of snipe. His benevolent-looking face beamed with enthusiasm as he related to us the wonderful shots he had made, of the bags he had filled, of the *grands messieurs* whom he had had the honour to meet, and the magnificent fowling-pieces it had been his good fortune to handle. His admiration of our breech-loaders was unbounded, as was also his praise of the contents of our flask; but he prided himself in regard to the latter in possessing such rum as could not be purchased in Quebec, and in proof thereof brought forth a bottle of it. It was certainly the best we had ever tasted, and had been in his father's house for many, many years.

In former times, when the West India trade with Quebec was much more extensive than it now is, rum was largely imported direct from there, and many captains took advantage of the extended length of unguarded river coasts to carry on a profitable trade with the farmers, many of whom laid in a stock which to this day still remains unfinished. Of such a stock was the rum which Pierre Garneau gave us to sample. As the evening advanced and his vivacity increased with added potations, he related to us the legends which had descended from the time of the siege, of the burning and desecrating of churches, of the desolating of whole villages, and the entire destruction of harvested crops by the English; of the cruel mode of warfare, in scalping the dead and murdering the wounded, and even their prisoners. His own grandfather and grandmother had narrowly escaped death by taking refuge in the mountains, where they remained hidden for weeks, living on herbs and what birds, squirrels,

and hares they could kill. "But," he continued, "*nous avons changé tout cela*, and the English are our good friends, and much better than the French," whose atrocities during the reign of the Commune seemed to have horrified the old man. "Ah!" he said, "we have better laws than in France, and we can attend our church and listen to our curé without fear or danger; and when we are ill we can go to *la bonne Ste. Anne*, who will cure us of all diseases, and make the lame to walk and the blind to see."

Our good host became quite eloquent over the miraculous cures affected by *la bonne Ste. Anne*, and resented any doubt of her superlative powers. The village of St. Anne is about seven miles below Chateau Richer, and is under the patronage of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary; and a part of one of her finger bones is deposited in the parish church, and is considered a most holy relic, capable of curing any suffering by the simple touching it. This church was lately created by the deceased Pope Pio IX. a shrine of a high order, and it is estimated that over thirty thousand pilgrims from all parts of the Continent yearly visit it. It has certainly been of great advantage to the inhabitants, and caused the circulation of a large amount of money, which, but for his Holiness' thoughtfulness, would never have been spent there. We at last confessed our faith in Ste. Anne, for our host was becoming argumentative, and we had to be out early on the beach.

It was between four and five o'clock the next morning when we heard our host calling us to get up—just the morning twilight, when one feels more than at any other time the desire for a little more slumber and folding of the hands. But the sportsman's life is not one of laziness, and we sprang from our beds to enjoy a bath in the spring water, which had at that early hour been drawn for us. It was icy cold, and soon brought our blood to a proper temperature, and refreshed and invigorated us for the exertions of the day. After taking a hearty breakfast of eggs and bacon and hot coffee, tempered by the richest of cream, we put on our *bottes sauvages*, which reached up to our thighs and were fastened round our waist, and rendered impervious to water by thick coats of neat's-foot oil, we let loose our dogs, shouldered our guns, and sallied forth.

The morning air was sharp, and the great red sun was just peering over the Island of Orleans, as through the wet grass we made our way to the beach, up which an easterly wind was beginning to blow. It had not yet begun to ruffle the surface of the River St. Lawrence, down which was quietly floating a *batteau* laden with pine deals, while the helmsman, in his shirt sleeves and wearing a *bonnet rouge*, was lazily sitting on the immense tiller, enjoying his morning smoke. Through the damp grass, over turned-up fields, and by solitary paths in woods of autumnal-tinted trees, we passed, till we came to a large hedge of haws and stunted oak trees, in which we found an opening, and gained the beach. Here was our shooting-ground.

We were almost on a level with the water, and the beach stretched for miles before us, while to the right rolled on for ever the great St. Lawrence. In the distance were mirages of far-off islands, and the

clouds and the water seemed to touch as upon the ocean. To the left were the variegated colours of the Canadian forest, dotting the land as with raiment of costly workmanship; and far upward rose the ranges of the Laurentian Mountains, whose tops were still covered with the heavy clouds of night.

Not a sound was heard, save our own hushed voices, as with poised guns and dogs at heel we carefully trod upon the sinking, marshy bottom. Then the dogs went forward, stood still, a point, a whirr, whizz in the air, and the rapid discharge of four barrels. Down charge, and the birds were found—two brace and a half out of four brace. But old Garneau had marked the fugitives, and again we pushed forward. Another whirr, and my gun brought down a bird, making three brace. A strange gun now appeared on the ground, and flushed the birds which had escaped us; but this was all fair, as we were on common property, and the birds were careless as to who shot them, if such were to be their destined fate, which, so far, seemed most probable.

As we cautiously advanced, we approached a small rivulet, and, while looking for a safe crossing, rose a flock of wild ducks. Then our breech-loaders came into good service, for in eight discharges we were able to bring down five brace. By the time we had retrieved our birds, the beach had become livelier, and the reports of fowling-pieces were heard continually. The east wind continued to freshen, and this was a good omen, as it would surely bring up more birds; and, in fact, in a short time my friend and myself, having become somewhat separated, could see and hear that each was busy in keeping time with the flushing of the snipe.

It was glorious sport, and although walking in two feet of water is not pleasant, and labouring in as many feet of sinking, marshy ground is much less so and very fatiguing, the time flew rapidly; and it was a matter of surprise when, looking at my watch, I found it was past twelve—the hour agreed upon for our *al fresco* lunch. I descried my friend at a distance, standing on a small hillock, waving his handkerchief to me, while Garneau stood by his side. I hastened to him, anxious to show my prizes and to see his, and was envious enough to begrudge him the difference of one which he had gained on me.

Some fowl and tongue sandwiches, washed down by Hennessey's best, dissipated all jealousy; and, finding a dry and comparatively soft spot, we lay down to enjoy the ever-consoling pipe. Evidently our fellow-sportsmen had followed our example, for there seemed to be a sudden cessation of the noise; even the snipe must have gone more vigorously to work probing for food with their long bills, for not a whirr disturbed the serenity, broken solely by wind through the long marshy grass, and the purling of a spring near by which supplied us with water to soften the Hennessey. Our hunger satisfied, and our *siesta* over, we resumed sport with renewed vigour, and again the beach was alive with gun reports and terrified snipe. Steadily we pushed onward, dealing destruction in the most orthodox manner and making good bags, which were beginning to get a little heavy for our personal conveni-

ence, although we had transferred the greater portion to old Garneau, who followed us and seemed to enjoy the sport as if participating in the killing himself.

We had reached the village of St. Anne, and he would not let us pass without our witnessing the truth of what he had asserted the evening before concerning the miraculous powers of the saints. So we went up to the church, and entered it. A young girl was on her knees in the aisle, devoutly counting her beads, and took not the slightest notice of our entrance or our examination of the piles of crutches which filled all sorts of nooks and corners in this favoured edifice. With such proof before our eyes, we could, of course, admit all the statements, however extravagant, of our credulous friend. We did not, however, see the relic; had we done so, it might probably have dispelled all our doubts.

After the visit to the shrine, we returned to the worship of Diana on our return tramp to Chateau Richer to the beach, and she was certainly as propitious as before, for the birds naturally seemed to rush in our way. When nearing the village we took a start upwards, and, crossing the road, reached the mountain path, and were lucky enough to add a few brace of partridges to our bag.

It was falling twilight, and the Angelus ringing when we reached our quarters, where I found a telegram which required my departure for the city early next morning. In fact, had we not been so tired and hungry, I would have left that evening; but it was with a delicious sense of comfort that, after divesting ourselves of our hunting gear, and performing a much needed ablution, we sat down to a comfortable dinner, consisting of trout, boiled mutton, snipe, and an excellently tasted apple pie, not to mention the extras brought from the city. Our long walk was not an incentive to any lengthy discussion with our host, nor did he himself seem more inclined to it than ourselves; so we retired early, and rose early the next morning quite prepared, if such were possible, to repeat the tramp of the previous day. When I say early, I mean about nine o'clock; for, like Tom Hood, I do not believe in early rising, when there are no fish to be caught nor snipe to be shot.

After a hearty breakfast, and a kind of farewell to our friends, we started for Quebec with our booty—thirty-five birds—and arrived there to astonish the citizens with what could be found on Chateau Richer beach.

THE LANGUAGE OF DOGS.—A friend of mine was once on a visit to Mr. Walter, at Bearwood, when one day, during dinner, a greyhound came into the room, shortly afterwards followed by a small spaniel of the Blenheim or Marlborough breed. They were observed to be laying their heads together, nose to nose, when Mrs. Walter remarked that something would come of it. Her words were verified, for on the following morning the confederates were discovered feasting on a newly-caught hare, which, doubtless the spaniel, by means of his faculty of scent, had found, and the greyhound, by her keen sight and speed, had run down.—*Cassell's Magazine.*

Can Fishes Hear?

THE following entertaining notice has appeared in a contemporary, the writer "doubting," he says, "whether fish hear at all. That they possess rudimentary ears, more or less developed, there can be no doubt, but that they can distinguish any sounds whatever I doubt; in fact, I believe fresh-water fish (of salt I know nothing) to be totally and undeniably stone deaf, and I record this opinion from an experience of between forty and fifty years as a fisherman (and a pretty successful one), from the lordly salmon to the humble gudgeon. In the instances quoted by Mr. Buckland, from the evidence given before him, I think the fishermen, though perfectly honest, to be mistaken in their views. The fact of the fish showing themselves on the gunwales of the boats being struck, I attribute to a different cause—viz., the vibration of the blows communicated through the water to the fish, and not to the sound. The vibrations caused in water by sound only do not to me appear to have the smallest effect on fish.

"I will just give a few instances, out of the hundreds that have occurred to me in my angling rambles, which have induced this firm conviction in my mind. On one occasion I discovered a trout of about half a pound feeding close under a 'stub' growing in the water. I crawled down until I could see him between two of the poles. He laid not six inches deep, and my face was about three feet off. After watching a few minutes, and seeing him gobble up sundry flies, &c., I began talking to him, piano at first, went through a rapid *crescendo*, until at last I indulged in all sorts of frantic yells, view halloas, thieves' whistles through the fingers, &c., *fortissimo*, and stopped suddenly; but it had no effect whatever. He went on feeding with the greatest sangfroid. I then slightly tapped the stub. In an instant he was all attention; tempting flies passed unheeded; another equally slight tap on the stub, and he was off like a shot!

"Another time I was fishing with a friend in a carp pond in Essex. We made our pitch on the bay near the penstock, and had excellent sport the whole time—talking, laughing, and whistling; but they came splendidly. After lunch my friend moved to a pitch some thirty or forty yards to the left, and I went to the same distance up the side to the right, and we kept continually shouting to each other across the water, still the carp (said to be, and I believe truly, the shiest and most wily of fish) kept coming as fast as we could wish, until my friend got fast to a heavy fish, and shouted to me to come quickly with the net, as he had got into weed and he feared he'd break away. I ran rapidly along the bay, and was just in time, but for half an hour or so we neither of us got a touch; then they began to come again slowly—a small fish at first, and afterwards as well as ever. This was the best day's carp fishing I ever had. We returned all undersized fish, but still brought away 80 lbs. of carp.

"I always considered the dull time without a bite was due to the scare the fish got from the jar (vibration) of my running along the bank. Certainly, all the noise we made did not affect them.

"Another time, while perch-fishing in a mill pond,

I had noticed a small jack lying under an alder bush growing on the bay. After a bit the keeper came along, and while talking to him just the other side of the said bank, a large rat made its appearance down the bay on the land side, and was instantly shot, the gun being levelled low. The bush, I presume, screened the flash from the jack, for, on looking, there he still laid, perfectly unconcerned, but on throwing a chip of wood at him he 'skedaddled slick.' Again, in trout-fishing I have often held conversation with friends on the opposite bank, eighty or one hundred yards off, and yet during the whole time have been rising and killing fish. Again, lightly tap a big stone under which a trout lies, and he is off like a shot, though the blow was quite inaudible."

As old anglers, we can thoroughly endorse his words.

GILDERSLEEVE SETTERS.—A correspondent of *Turf, Field, and Farm*, inquires the origin of this strain of setters (a breed well known in the States), and elicited the following reply:—"In or about the year 1840, an Englishman, whose Christian name we do not recall, but whose last cognomen was Gildersleeve, came to this country with a pair of orange-and-white setters, which had large dark eyes and black noses and muzzles. The dog and bitch were hunted around Canterbury, Delaware, and for their good looks and excellent field qualities had more than a local reputation. From this pair sprang the strain known by the name of Gildersleeve. As their offspring inherited in a marked degree the excellences of the old pair, the dogs, when sold off for more distant places, still retained the name. As is the case at present, when every native red dog claims descent from Paul Mead's, or Rodman's Dash, so years since every owner of an orange-and-white, with black points, hastened to tack Gildersleeve to his pedigree."

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXXI.—A BIT OF A SCUFFLE.



OLLO suddenly whispered, "Dat's shark," as he pointed down to where the points of light flashed more vividly as they were agitated; and though they could not make out the shape of the monster, it was plain to see that some great fish was slowly gliding through the water.

"What's he hanging about after?" said Oakum, watching the place intently. "I should have thought it had been made too warm for them gentlemen, and they'd have given us a wide berth."

"He know somebody go to die soon," said Pollo, in a low voice. "Dat Mass' Studwick or pretty Missee Pugh."

"Don't you talk humbug," said Oakum, with a growl. "Phew! it's strange and hot. I shall go and turn in."

"You soon turn out again, Mass' Oakum, you go below. De cockroach hab fine game night like dis hyar, sah; and de skeetas buzz 'bout like anyfing. You 'top on deck and lay down under de awning. Dey coming on deck, dose oder chap, half baked, sah?"

"How do you know?" growled Sam.

"I hear some one, sah, just now come crawl up, and—Oh! Goramighty, who hit me on de head?"

For just then there was a dull thud, a fall, and Sam Oakum felt himself seized from behind, and a hard hand placed over his mouth.

He was too sturdy a fellow, though, to submit to

that; and wrenching himself free, he sent one of his assailants one way, and the other sprawling over the body of Pollo, and, darting aside, he gave a spring, caught at the inner side of the main shrouds, swung his legs up, and as the two men ran in pursuit of him, they passed beneath him in the darkness, and he climbed softly up higher and higher, then crawling round to the outside, and clung there, gazing down into the darkness below, feeling that he had had a narrow escape for his life.

"The ship's been boarded in the dark," he muttered, as he listened attentively, seeing nothing, but making out something of the proceedings by the sounds below.

There was no mistake about it: the ship had been taken with hardly so much as a scuffle, and though he could not see more than a figure trot quickly by one of the skylights, he could hear that the hatches were being secured, and men posted there; and for a minute felt sure that they had been boarded in the darkness, and that the principal men in the watch had kept a bad look-out. Directly after, though, there came a bit more scuffling, and an oath or two, and he heard a voice that he knew; and then, like a light, it all came upon him, that while they had been watching out-board, there was an enemy in the ship, and the men had risen.

Now came the noise of the cabin hatches being secured; then there were short, sharp orders here and there, followed by a struggle, a wild cry, and a heavy fall. Then came the splash heard below in the cabin, and Oakum muttered to himself—

"There's one poor fellow gone to his long home."

Then he set himself to make out who it could be, but his attention was taken off directly by sounds of the alarm having spread below.

"And now how about all the silver?" muttered Oakum. "That's about the size of what this here means."

Sam was right; for the ship had been seized for the sake of the silver found, and that which was to be discovered; for Lauré had decided that it was not safe to wait any longer. He had been waiting his time, and had there been no chance of discovery he intended to let Parkley and Dutch go from wreck to wreck, and obtain all the sunken treasure possible before seizing the vessel. But now the plot seemed so ripe that if allowed to go further it might fail; so, exasperated by his encounter that evening, he had whispered his intentions to the men under his orders, unfortunately more than half the crew, and as Sam Oakum listened from aloft he could hear the scoundrels hurrying about, the hatches secured, and then proceedings followed that showed him that the alarm had fully spread.

First there was the shivering of a skylight, Captain Studwick calling out to know what the noise meant,

followed by beating and kicking at the door; and then several shots were fired, followed by a dead silence, broken by Lauré's voice giving orders in a sharp, business-like way.

"I wonder where poor old Pollo is," said Sam Oakum, as he sat upon his perch thinking; and by force of habit he took out his tobacco box, helped himself to a bit, and began to consider about the perils of his position. Where he was would do very well for now, he argued; but as soon as the day began to break he would be seen, and then the probabilities were that he would be shot down.

"Leastwise, p'rhaps, they'll let me off as soon as I say I'll jyne 'em; but that won't come off. Now, who's in this game, I wonder? That yaller-skinned mulatto chap's one, for a dollar; and there's roughs enough among those as came aboard with him to make up a pretty crew, I'll swear."

Sam sat thinking while the captors of the vessel were pretty busy down below, and at last, one plug of tobacco being ended, he started upon another; but this time, not being so cautious, or rather having his attention taken up by what was passing below, he closed the steel tobacco-box with a loud, clear snap, and in the stillness of the night this sounded so clearly that he knew he must be discovered.

To change his position was the work of a few moments; and while he was in the act of moving there was a sharp flash, and the report of a pistol, followed by another and another, the bullets whistling close by him.

"There's some one up in the rigging," said Lauré, sharply. "It's that black cook."

"No," said another voice, "we fetched him down first off, and he's been pitched below."

"Who is it, then?" said Lauré, sharply.

"I think Oakum was on deck," said another voice.

"Here you, Sam Oakum, come down," said Lauré, in a clear, loud voice. "Come down, and you shall not be hurt."

"That's nice palaver, after sending bullets to fetch a man down," said Sam to himself; "and after pitching one poor chap to the sharks. I think I'll stay where I am."

"Here, two of you to the port, and two to the starboard shrouds. Take your knives with you, and if the scoundrel won't give in, fetch him down best way you can."

Sam Oakum drew a long breath as he heard these words; and then, the rigging beginning to quiver, he set his teeth, and began to make cautiously for one of the stays, intending to get to the next mast if he could, and so steal down on deck, where, if he could contrive to reach the poop, he might climb over and join those below through the cabin windows.

It was ticklish work, though; for as he glided and swung from place to place, he could hear by the hard breathing that he was closely pursued. Spider-like, too, the touching of the various ropes by his enemies gave him fair warning that he was in danger, though, unfortunately, his movements were in the same way telegraphed to his enemies.

At last they came so near that his capture seemed certain, or, if not capture, he felt sure that a blow from a knife would be his portion. For, just as he

was going to pass on to the shrouds he had reached, he felt by their vibration that some fresh men were coming up, and, seizing a rope, he swung himself out clear from the top, and hung there, gently swaying about, hearing his pursuers pass close by him, so near that he could have stretched out one hand and touched them.

As far as he could judge, he was now just over the cabin skylight, and his heart bounded, for somewhere about here ought to be the top of the windsail hung up in the rigging, so that the great canvas tube might convey the fresh air below to take the place of the hot.

"If I could only reach that," thought Sam, "I might slip inside, and go down with a run into the cabin."

He felt about gently for some few moments—not a very easy task, swinging as he was—and then, to his great joy, he felt his leg come in contact with the rope that suspended the sail, threw his legs round it, and slid down to the top; then, feeling for the opening in the side, he thrust in his leg and held on for a moment, while he drew his knife and opened it with his teeth, determined to sell his life dearly if he should be assailed.

It was well he did so; for directly after, squaring his elbows so as to make all the resistance possible to a rapid descent, he let himself glide into the long canvas sack; but, in spite of his efforts, he went down with a rapid run, not as he expected into the cabin, but upon the deck, where he lay struggling for a few moments before he could get his knife to work, and rip up a sufficiently large slit to allow of his rolling out, and then leaped to his feet ready to meet the first attack that came.

The darkness befriended him, for no one dared fire for fear of hitting a friend, and though the noise of his fall brought his enemies round, it was only to seize one another; and in the midst of the confusion he escaped, and dashed off in a hard race, closely pursued by half a dozen scoundrels, whose purpose evidently was to hunt him overboard.

Twice over he ran into some one's arms, and once he ran full tilt against an enemy, and sent him rolling over on to the deck; but he knew it couldn't last, and that, in spite of doubling, they must have him. He could hear panting, and voices all round, and on leaving off running, and creeping cautiously about, more than once he felt some one pass close by—regularly felt them, they were so close. Once he thought of getting into the chains, but he knew if he did they would see him as soon as it was day-break. Then he thought he might just as well jump overboard, and make an end of it, as be pitched over.

Directly after, Sam fancied he could crawl under the spare sail that covered the long-boat, and lie there. Last of all he made for the poop, meaning to try and climb down to one of the cabin windows; but he stopped half way on account of the binnacle-light, and crept back towards the forepart to see if he could get down to the fore-cabin. But it was of no use, and the only wonder was that he did not run right into some one's arms; but the chances, perhaps, were not after all so very

much against him, and he kept clear till they grew savage, and he could hear that they were cutting about with either knives or cutlasses; and, in spite of his trouble, he could not help wondering how they had come by their arms, for, of course, he could not know then how Lauré had stolen them from the cabin while the captain was asleep.

Shouts and oaths rang around him, and over and over again poor Oakum felt that his only chance of escaping from one horrible death was by seeking another.

"But, no," he muttered, "I'm not going to be served like that." And he dodged round mast, galley, and boat, crouching under bulwarks, and escaping over and over again by a miracle, as he tried hard to think of some means of baffling his pursuers. The cabin skylight was too strongly covered with wire-work, he thought, or he would have tried to leap through; and as to leaping overboard, swimming beneath the cabin window, and calling to those who were prisoners to lower down a rope, that was not to be thought of after the sight he had seen that night in the luminous water.

"I should be torn to pieces," he muttered. "Take that, you mutinous ruffian," he added, as he struck out fiercely at one of his enemies, lying down the next moment flat on the deck, so that a pursuer fell over him, and went down with a crash.

Try how he would, the fugitive was beaten. At every turn in the darkness, an enemy seemed to spring up in his way; and as he heard the whish of blows directed at him, he wondered he had escaped so long.

But a man running for his life is hard to overtake, especially if he have the darkness for his ally; and so it was that at the end of five minutes, during which time Sam had been a dozen times within an ace of being taken, he was still at large, standing panting close to the fore-castle hatch, while his enemies were creeping cautiously up, ready to make a spring.

"If I'm to be threw overboard," muttered Sam, "I won't go alone, anyhow. If the sharks is to be fed, they shall have a double allowance." And setting his teeth with a vicious, grating noise, he prepared for a run ast.

The darkness was now more intense than ever, for a thick mist had come off the land, enshrouding the deck so that Sam could not see the knife he grasped in his hand; but his ears were strained so that he could make out the panting breath of his enemies as they came nearer and nearer, and to his horror he found that they had spread themselves right across the deck; and his imagination suggested that they had joined hands so as to make sure that he did not escape, literally dragging the deck from stern forward, so he knew that they were certain of him this time.

His only chance seemed to be to run out on the bowsprit, and try to get by one of the stays on to the foremast; but the men were so close that he felt sure they would cut him down before he had gone a yard.

Crouching down, and backing, he was close to the capstan, when his foot came in contact with a fender, one of those heavy pads of cordage and net-

work used to keep ships' sides from grinding on a stone wharf.

In an instant he had caught it up, and, raising it in both hands above his head, he waited his time, and then as the men closed up he hurled it with all his force against the nearest, catching him full in the chest, and sending him down like a skittle, when, as he uttered a cry, the others believing that the man they sought to capture had sprung upon him, closed in with a shout, and Oakum dashed by them again.

His triumph was but short-lived, for the men were after him directly, chasing him now more savagely than ever. Once or twice his bare feet had slipped on the wet deck, and he had shuddered, believing it to be blood; and, forgetting the place, as, now panting and nearly exhausted, he was running on, feeling that the time had come to stand at bay, one of his feet glided over the board, and, as he made an effort to save himself by a leap, there was a heavy crash, a fall, and he knew no more.

CHAPTER XXXII.—AWAKENING.

HOW long Dutch had been asleep he could not tell, but he was dreaming of some fresh trouble. He was diving, and one of the sharks kept striking him blows on the helmet, the noise seeming to reverberate within his brain, when, making an effort, he dragged the helmet off, so as to more clearly see his enemy, and strike at it with his knife, when he awoke to hear noises overhead, the beating of feet, and, as he leaped out of his cot, struggling, a horrible cry, and he stood paralysed as, the next moment, the cabin door was banged to, and sounds came as of ropes being piled upon it.

"In God's name, what does this mean?" said the doctor, who had leaped out of his berth, and was hastily dressing.

"God only knows," replied Dutch. "But quick! Miss Studwick! My wife! Get to their cabin door. Indians, perhaps, from the shore—an attack—we must save them."

"Even at the expense of our lives," said the doctor, in a low voice. "Have you taken my revolver, or my gun?"

"No, no. Mine are gone, too!" exclaimed Dutch. "Never mind, man, we have our hands. Quick!"

They rushed out of the cabin, nearly oversetting Mr. Parkley and the naturalist; but, paying no heed, Dutch rushed to the little cabin where his wife was clinging to Bessy Studwick, tried the door to find it fastened, and then with one kick sent it off its hinges.

"Hester!" he cried, hoarsely—"Hester!"

For answer she sprang to his neck, and clung there with a sigh of relief.

"This way," he said—"into the main cabin. Thank heaven you are safe."

"And you," she moaned, as she felt his strong arms round her; and, catching one of his hands convulsively, she pressed it upon her heart, while her lips sought for his in vain. "Dutch, Dutch, husband—call me wife once more."

"I'd give my life to do so, Hester," he whispered, passionately, the unknown peril of the night having broken down the icy barrier that had existed for so long.

"Dutch," she whispered back, "if truth to you deserves the right to be called your wife, you may speak the word."

"But it is no time to speak now," he exclaimed. "Some terrible calamity has befallen us."

"Yes, yes—it was what I feared!" she moaned, clinging more tightly to him.

"You feared?" he said. "But stop! Now, in this time of peril, Hester, when in a few moments we may be separated for ever, tell me the truth—you were speaking to some man, and even to-night?"

"Yes, Dutch," she said.

"It was that mulatto?"

"Mulatto!" she said, bitterly. "It was Señor Lauré."

"Lauré!" he exclaimed. "Yes, I half suspected him. And you knew he was on board, and did not warn us," he added, in a tone of disgust, as he tried to free himself from his wife's embrace.

"I could only warn you at the peril of your life, Dutch," she said. "He threatened me."

They were interrupted by the voice of the captain, shouting for the door to be opened.

"Are you there, doctor?" said Dutch.

"Yes," was the reply.

"And Miss Studwick?"

"I am here," said Bessy, quietly. "Hester, give me your hand."

It was pitch dark, and they dared not light a lamp for fear of making marks of themselves for those on board, especially as, in reply to the captain breaking the cabin skylight, a couple of pistol shots were fired down, fortunately without effect.

Just then Captain Studwick spoke.

"I cannot understand this," he said. "There must be some treachery somewhere, or we have been boarded in the night. It cannot be an Indian attack. Dutch Pugh, can Lauré have overtaken us?"

"Overtaken us—poor children that we were to try to fight him with brains!" said Dutch, bitterly, "he has never let us out of his sight."

"What!" cried Mr. Parkley.

"He has been on board from the first, with half a dozen picked men."

"And he was the mulatto?" cried Captain Studwick. "Curse the fellow! Then we are indeed undone."

There was a few moments' silence, and then Captain Studwick spoke again.

"I always felt that there was something wrong—always. Bear me witness that I did, Pugh; and yet I could not tell what it was."

"You did," said Dutch, who was listening intently.

"But this is no time for talking," cried Mr. Parkley, excitedly. "The scoundrel! the villain! to outdo us like this; and at such a time, when we have just succeeded in getting the treasure. Only to think of it, we have been working like this for him."

"It has not come to that yet," said Dutch, quietly, and his voice sounded strangely in the dark. "We are fastened down here, of course, Studwick?"

"Yes, I have tried hard, but they have barricaded us," said the captain.

"How many are we here?" said Dutch.

"Don't talk like that, Mr. Pugh," said Wilson, the naturalist. "You never mean to fight?"

"Englishmen always mean to fight, Mr. Wilson," said Dutch, sternly, "when there are women to protect."

"That was well said," whispered a voice from the far end of the little saloon. "I wish I was a strong, hearty man like you."

"I wish so too, my boy," said Captain Studwick between his teeth. "Poor lad, his soul is strong, if his body is weak."

"Answer to your names, you who are here," said Dutch; and in return he repeated those of the captain, Mr. Parkley, the doctor, naturalist, and John Studwick. "The ladies, I know, are here," he added.

"Would to heaven they were not," muttered the doctor.

"There's more here nor you've called over," said a gruff voice.

"That's Rasp," cried Mr. Parkley, eagerly.

"Yes, and there's a couple o' sailors here too," said the old fellow; "on'y they've lost their tongues."

"Who are they?" asked the captain, sharply.

"Here's Dick Rolls here, capen," said a rough voice.

"And who is that speaking?" said the captain.

"Robert Lennie, your honour," was the reply.

"The two men I suspected," whispered the captain to Dutch. "We've been on the wrong scent throughout."

"Miss Studwick had better go with my wife into the fore-cabin," said Dutch; and his lips trembled as, at the words "my wife," he heard a faint sob. Then there was a low, rustling noise, and in a moment more all was still.

"Now, captain, quickly!" said Dutch; "had you not better serve out the arms?"

"They would have been served out before now, Pugh," was the reply, "if we had had them."

"You don't mean—" gasped Dutch, as he recollected missing his own pistol from its shelf in the little cabin.

"I mean that while our minds have been dead on the silver," said the captain, bitterly, "sharper brains than ours have been dead on seizing the golden opportunities. I have searched, and there is not a weapon left."

A low murmur ran round the cabin; and then there was perfect silence, as they all stood there in the pitchy darkness and stifling heat, for the wind-sail had been withdrawn, listening intently to the sounds above; for it was evident now that some fresh disturbance was on foot—in fact, the noise of the discovery of Oakum now began to reach their ears, accompanied directly after by the sound of shots.

"They are not all enemies on deck, then," said Dutch, eagerly. "Who can that be?"

"It must be Oakum or Mr. Jones," exclaimed the captain.

"Surely we have more true men on board than that?" said Dutch, who, in this time of emergency, seemed to take the lead.

"I hope so," was the captain's remark; and then once more there was silence on deck, following upon a sharp order or two that they could not make out.

Just then Dutch felt a hand laid upon his arm.

"Who is this?" he said, in a low voice.

"It is I—Meldon," said the doctor, in the same tone. "Lean towards me, Mr. Pugh."

"What do you wish to say?" said Dutch.

"Shall we be obliged to fight, Mr. Pugh?" whispered the doctor.

"Are you afraid, sir?" was the reply.

"Perhaps I am; it is only natural, Mr. Pugh," said the doctor. "I have seen so much of death, that I have learned to fear it more than a rough sailor or soldier perhaps; but I was not speaking for myself."

"I am glad of that," said Dutch, with something of a sneer; for he was annoyed at being interrupted at such a time.

"You need not sneer, Mr. Pugh," said the doctor, quietly. "What I fear is that if we come to some bloody struggle, it may mean death to some here."

"It is pretty sure to, sir—especially to one," he muttered, "if I get him by the throat. Who is that moving there?" he said, aloud.

"O'n'y me, Mr. Pug," said a rough voice; and the doctor went on.

"You misunderstand me, Mr. Pugh," continued the doctor, in a whisper. "I mean that the shock might be fatal to young Studwick, and I am sure it would be, in her delicate state, to your wife."

"My wife should have stayed ashore, sir," said Dutch, rather bitterly; for he resented this interference.

"Your words are very bitter, Mr. Pugh," said the doctor, coldly; "and, excuse me, not manly at such a time. Ever since that night when I was called in to Mrs. Pugh, and she had that series of swoons—"

"You called in to my wife," said Dutch, who was startled by the words—"one night?"

"Yes, Miss Studwick sent for me, as I was close at hand. Did you not know?"

"No, no," said Dutch. "I was away from home. I—I forgot—I did not know."

"I mean when I found her so weak and ill. You must know—that night I carried her up to bed."

"Yes—yes," said Dutch, in a strange voice, that he did not know for his own. "You mean that night when you carried her in your arms—to her bed-room—there was a light there."

"Of course. Miss Studwick held it for me," said the doctor. "I thought you would recollect."

"Yes—yes," said Dutch, strangely. "I had forgotten. My God, I must have been mad!" he muttered.

"I beg your pardon," said the doctor, in a low whisper.

"Nothing, nothing; go on, sir, pray."

"I am glad I have awakened your interest," said the doctor. "You thought me officious; but indeed, Mr. Pugh, she needs your care and thought. That night I thought she would have died. Some trouble, I fear, had given her incipient brain fever, and I really dread what may happen if she is subjected to this shock. If anything can be done—"

"I shall see—I shall see," said Dutch, hoarsely.

"It was you, then, who carried her upstairs—not our regular practitioner," he added, with his voice trembling.

"Yes," said the doctor, "I thought you knew."

"Don't speak to me any more now, doctor," said Dutch, feeling for Mr. Meldon's hand, and pressing it warmly. "God bless you for this. I shall never forget it."

"It is nothing, Pugh, nothing," said the other, warmly. "Forgive me if I seemed to resent your words. I know you are much troubled now."

"Hark!" exclaimed Dutch. "Listen!"

There was a rush across the deck, evidently far forward, and once more silence.

"Heaven forgive me!" said Dutch, to himself; and then, in spite of the terrible peril they were in, he felt his way to the further cabin, and in a low voice whispered his wife's name.

"Hester, here!"

With a faint cry of joy, she stretched out her hands to him, for there was that in his voice which made her heart leap.

"Dutch! Dutch!" she whispered, as she wreathed her arms round his neck, and clung to him tightly.

"Hester, darling," he whispered, "you should curse me, and not treat me so. My darling, I have been mad, and have but just learned the truth. Forgive me, dear, forgive me. One word, for I must go."

"Forgive you?" she whispered back, as she pressed her lips to his in a long, passionate kiss. "Husband, dear husband, tell me you believe in me again."

"Never to doubt you more, darling," he groaned. "I cannot tell you now. Loose me—quickly—I must go."

"No, no," she whispered; "not yet, not yet—one more word, Dutch—one more word."

"Stand ready there, every one," said the captain, in a loud, stern voice, "and close up, gentlemen. Let every man aim at getting the weapons from the cowardly villains. Be firm: we have right on our side."

There was a sharp, rustling noise, and the loud tramp of feet overhead; and then the captain's voice was heard once more out of the darkness—

"Quick, there! Where is Dutch Pugh? The scoundrels are coming down."

The noise overhead increased as Dutch tore himself from his wife's arms, and hurried to join the defenders; but the captain's words were premature, as, after a few minutes, the sounds seemed to go forward once more and almost to escape, and just then Rasp's voice was heard—

"I've been having a rummage about, and here's two or three tools to go on with. S'pose you take this, Mr. Pug—it's your knife; and here's one for you, Mr. Parkley, and one for the captain. Is there any gent as would like an axe?"

"Give it to me," said the doctor. "Have you anything for yourself?"

"Only another axe," said the old fellow; "but it's as sharp as a razor."

The diving implements in Rasp's cabin had been forgotten by all save him, and these he now passed round, sending a thrill of satisfaction through all present, for it was like doubling their strength; and, as those who were armed now stood round the door, there was a rush of feet overhead, the sound

of curses, a heavy fall, and those below felt mad with rage at being unable to go to the aid of some one who was evidently fighting on their side, when there was a tremendous crash, and something heavy fell through the skylight to the floor by their side.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

The Game of Football.

THIS game, says the *Standard*, speaking, on the whole, in its praise, is decidedly one to be encouraged. According to the experience of some years past, just at this time, when the football season "sets in with its usual severity," the public press is bountifully supplied with correspondence on the subject of the game, which has attained a very widely-spread popularity in the United Kingdom; but at the same time reckons not a few bitter enemies, partly on the score of its rough, uncivilized aspect, but mainly on that of the dangers to life and limb alleged to be encountered by those who play it. The opponents of the game are naturally the first to seek to ventilate their views publicly; but no sooner are they given an opportunity of so doing than there come to hand in abundance the "apologies" for the game by its champions.

As usual, too, very strange language is indulged in on both sides; though here the attack has the advantage of the defence, for in decrying a game, or for the matter of that anything else, the vocabulary of the English language gives a far wider choice of strong expressions for those who make an assault than for those who simply have to resist it. Then such terms as "ruffianly game," "wanton brutality," "anachronism of ferocity," "gross savagery," and so forth, are freely launched against the pastime; while—

"The fiery youth, with desperate charge,"

who indulges in it, has hurled at his unoffending head, but offending legs, a whole volley of epithets which make him out to be a bloodthirsty savage, and as low in the social scale at home as an inveterate wife-beater. On the other hand, the players and defenders of the game, after repudiating, emphatically enough to be sure, the outrageous language of their abusers, cannot do more than uphold their pastime as a fair and legitimate sport, conducted on defined rules—some of which have for their object the reduction of the dangers of the game—and as a healthy, manly, out-door amusement, in which they have a perfect right, if they are so minded, as free men, to receive more kicks than halfpence, and to run what dangers to life and limb it pleases them in a favourite pursuit.

But, after all, the game of football may fairly be considered to have passed out of the regions of discussion, in the sense that it is too firmly established for adverse discussion on paper to affect it. If it falls into desuetude, it will be because the players themselves become convinced that it is really too dangerous a game to be upheld, or because they get tired of it, and allow it to drop out, as some other fashions in the way of sports, pastimes, and athletics have dropped out before it. A paper crusade against it is more likely to raise enthusiasm in its

favour, in the present temper of our athletes, than to weaken the forces of its adherents.

The establishment, or, to speak more correctly, the general revival of football during the last twenty-five years or so is one of the most surprising in the history of our sports and games. It was, in days long gone by, very popular in this country, though the old "rough-and-tumble" unscientific kicking about "the leather" can hardly be compared to the game of real skill played by modern footballists. It is said that the Romans, who derived the game in some form or other from the Greeks, taught it to our ancestors. If they did, they found apt pupils, who transmitted it to a willing posterity.

At all events, it was a peculiar pastime long before the reign of the Third Edward, who, through fear that the practice of archery among his subjects might suffer from the competition of other out-door amusements, appears to have interdicted football and some other games. His disobedient people, however, did not pay much regard to his edict; and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the game continued to flourish, its roughness being its distinguishing feature, and the form of the game apparently consisting in a violent and haphazard kicking the ball up and down the streets of towns and villages. As the population, in a certain sense, became more civilized, football in this style gradually fell into abeyance, and during the first half of the present century it almost ceased to be played as a recognized game, except at our public schools, where it seems never to have fallen into absolute disrepute.

Thus, football became mainly a game for boys, and them only, at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and perhaps a few other old foundations. Here, however, it found a congenial home, and was assiduously cultivated, assuming at each school a different and almost distinct form. Eton and Rugby pre-eminently were the strongholds of the game; and on the basis of the forms of the field game, as played according to very stringent rules at those schools—omitting all notice of the distinctive Eton "game at the wall"—were established the two great sections of football players of the present day, viz., those who play the "Association," and those who play the "Rugby Union" game.

The modern revival of football seems to have been begun at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge as nearly as possible about twenty-five years ago. Before that date no such thing as a football had been seen at the Universities for generations, though it is possible that the game was played there in an almost pre-historic era, when "men" resorted to those seats of learning as mere "boys," and the statutes of the University of Oxford forbade the playing at marbles, as evidently a "childish thing" which ought to be "put away." A line was to be drawn somewhere, and then it was at marbles; but University "men" now indulge as freely in the football of their youth as when they were hardly well into their "teens" at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Westminster, Winchester, and a whole host of other institutions which now are classed among the public schools.

At both Universities football, in its season, is

now pursued with as much zeal and spirit as boating and cricket; the colleges play football matches as vigorously among one another as they do cricket matches or contest for a place on the river. Inter-University football, in its twofold form, is hardly of less consideration than the Inter-University cricket, or even the great Putney boat-race; and both Universities send forth annually their football elevens and fifteens to do battle with the strongest clubs of the four great divisions of the kingdom. The Metropolis, the great centres of population in the provinces, large country towns and country villages, followed suit; and, gradually at first, and quickly afterwards, football became almost as popular a game for the winter or spring months as cricket so long has been for summer and autumn, the two games dividing the year pretty equally between them.

Any one not thoroughly conversant with the proportions the game has assumed, who will take the trouble to look into the "Football Annals" now regularly published at the close of each season, will be surprised to see the strong hold the game has taken on the great body of the population which devotes itself, as it has done so widely in no previous era of our history, to athletic sports and pastimes.

The clubs representing the "Association" and the "Rugby Union" games are numbered by hundreds in England; and probably almost as many games at football are now played during its season as of cricket in its season. In the midland and northern districts the mania, as it may almost be called, is increasing each year. In Wales the game flourishes; and across the Tweed our Scotch friends are, perhaps, the most enthusiastic players of all; while in Ireland, too, every year sees a fresh addition to the established clubs. Each year also sees an increasing number of persons who, though not players, interest themselves in all the details of the respective games.

In London, as many as four thousand spectators will assemble at the Oval, and watch, in the cold and wet, a game between two good football teams with as much interest and intelligence as they do a contest between two first-rate cricket elevens, beneath warm and sunny skies; while northwards, at such centres of football as Sheffield, and, farther north still, at Glasgow and Edinburgh, it is no uncommon thing for ten thousand persons to be present on a football field on grand occasions. At Kennington Oval, as the annual contest for the Association Challenge Cup proceeds, almost as many spectators are attracted as to the inter-county and other great cricket matches there, at Lord's, and elsewhere.

Last season no fewer than forty-three clubs, from all parts of the kingdom, contested for this trophy; and this season forty-six entered the lists, and the games in the first round, already played in London, have drawn more spectators than ever. A still increasing interest in the game is also reported from other parts of the country; and there can be little doubt but that the football season of 1878-9 will eclipse all its immediate predecessors, especially as inter-county football will form a conspicuous feature of it.

And not only in this country, but in the colonies far and wide, is football making progress, and establishing itself, as cricket has done, wherever Englishmen take up their abode. In all parts of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, are found football clubs of the Association or Rugby Union, and many are associated with the respective head-quarters of the games at home; and colonial football is likely to receive a still further impetus from a visit already projected of an English team of representative players to Australia, to play a series of matches, as our cricketers have done before them in their line, with the lovers of football at the Antipodes.

Whether we shall succeed in inoculating foreigners with an appreciation of football, as we have already succeeded in doing in the case of some with an appreciation of cricket, remains to be seen; but it is evident that wherever the English tongue is spoken, there has football established itself, and seems likely, for the present at all events, to hold its ground.

With these facts confronting us, it really savours of an anachronism to discuss seriously the merits and demerits of the game. The revival of football is a *fait accompli*; and, so far from there being any signs of it giving way to some other pastime, the very reverse seems to be the case. The game is now as national a pastime in its season as cricket; the "people love to have it so," and who shall say them nay? As to the dangers of the game, after all, this is a question which must in the main be left for the players themselves to decide, not the outsiders. We are aware that from several points of view it may be argued that one form of the game is more dangerous than the other; but into these we do not care to enter.

Granted that both forms of the game are dangerous, we can hardly see that any good would result from dilating on them. The rules of both games are constantly being modified with the view to diminish the danger, and all deliberate and unnecessary violence and "foul" play is strongly provided against. But football, from its inherent elements, must always be somewhat of a dangerous game, and perhaps the increasing spirit and rivalry with which it is played, as the game becomes more and more popular, will make it the more dangerous. It is puerile to talk of "putting down" the game, and still more so of external legislation: such a thing would be impossible. A proclamation, in this age of athleticism, such as that James I. is said to have issued, to this effect:—"I debarre all rough and violent exercises, as the football, meeter for lameing than making able the user thereof"—would be laughed to scorn. Granted that it would be desirable to make football less dangerous than it is, the object could never be attained if the game, as a game worth playing, is to hold its ground at all. It may be said that it is a game for boys and not for men, whose set frames are more easily damaged by violent collisions. But what if men will play at it? Who is to stop them, or to moderate the pace at which men shall be allowed to collide?

No; the game and its players must take their chance, and what is possible in the way of its further amelioration must be left to those with whom rests

the power of making alterations in it. Accidents of various kinds occur in almost every department of our sports and pastimes—in hunting, shooting, racing, cricket, skating, and many other amusements; but few reasonable persons would hold up their hands for their suppression on that score; and when we consider the tens, nay hundreds, of thousands of men and boys who play football during the winter months, the relative number of those who meet with serious accidents will in reality contrast very favourably with that with which many another sport and pastime, not usually classed as dangerous, must be credited.

Here, then, we must leave the matter, only adding the remark that an erroneous impression seems to have got abroad that bad temper on the part of the players is the most frequent cause of injuries being inflicted. If this were so it would be a strong argument against the game; but the allegation is not founded on fact. Certainly, in all high-class matches a loss of temper is a most unusual phenomenon. There may be occasionally a little excess of zeal, but "vicious" playing, we make bold to say on behalf of the footballists, is almost unknown. The game, in both its forms, is now pre-eminently one of skill and science, of discipline and good manners, of patience and observation. Mere violence and brute force play but a very secondary part in it, and are strongly discountenanced by all who have the interests of the game at heart.

Golden Globes.

WITH the month of November commences the orange season—*i. e.*, in London—as many know to their cost who have slipped upon pieces of orange peel, so plentifully and thoughtlessly scattered on our pavement. The recognized season for importation covers, generally speaking, about nine months of the year, ending in July—though small consignments come to this country even after that; and thus we have oranges imported from some part of the world or other almost the whole year round. The case was very different but a few years ago, before steamers of large tonnage were regularly employed in the trade, as they have been during the last twelve years. The first steamer exclusively devoted to the orange trade arrived in London in November, 1867; but before this date it not unfrequently happened that London was without an orange supply for three or four weeks in the winter months.

The orange tree is one of the most beautiful and interesting of vegetable growths. Its botanical name is *Citrus*, said to be derived from the town of Citron, in Judæa. It belongs to the genus of plants known as the natural order of *Aurantiacea*, or "golden fruit-bearers;" and thus it requires no great stretch of the imagination to conclude that the "golden apples" of the garden of Hesperides were oranges. It is from the low Latin *Pomum Aurantium* we get the word "orange," which occurs in different forms in several languages. The genus *Citrus* contains a large number of species and varieties, the fruits being known under such names as orange, lemon, lime, shaddock, pompelmoore, forbidden fruit, kum-

quat, and citron. The species *C. Aurantium*, with its varieties of sweet oranges, is the best known to us. Risso, the eminent naturalist of Nice, published at Paris, in 1818, an elaborate history of oranges, in which he described no fewer than 169 varieties. These he divided into eight species—*viz.*, sweet oranges, bitter oranges, begamottes, limes, pampelunos, sweet limes, lemons, and citrons; and of the first of these, with which we are now concerned, he enumerated no less than forty-three varieties, though it is probable that all these are derived from the common orange, *C. Aurantium*. It is said that the sweet (or China orange) was first brought into Europe from China by the Portuguese in 1547; and, further, that the original tree whence all the European orange trees of this class have been produced is, or at least was, a few years ago, preserved at Lisbon in one of the gardens of the nobility. But the first mention of oranges in England is of much earlier date, for it is recorded that in 1290 Edward the First's Queen bought from the cargo of a Spanish ship which came to Portsmouth various fruits, among which were seven oranges (*Poma de orange*). Still, though Edward's marriage with Eleanor of Castile led to greater intercourse with Spain, it does not appear that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was any great commerce in oranges, as the name of the fruit is not to be found either in the "Libell of English Policy," the "Liber Albus of London," or Professor Rogers's "Collection of Bills," in all of which many other—and, indeed, most—articles of fruit and grocery are mentioned.

In 1432, Henry VI., on his return from being crowned King of France, was welcomed by the citizens with a pageant in which was a grove or

"Orangis, almondis, and the pome-garnade,"

as poetically described by Lydgate. In 1470 oranges are noticed in the Paston letters. In 1502 Elizabeth of York gave a reward to the servant of the prothonotary of Spain for bringing a present of oranges; and in the household expenses book of Henry VIII. (1530), and his daughter, the Princess Mary (1539), payments for oranges are mentioned. In 1558 the Stationers' Company, in a Court dinner, indulged in the fruit to the value of 4d.

By the end of the sixteenth century oranges were recognized as a notable article of commerce, and, according to Stowe (1598), Billingsgate was the principal quay for landing them. The sweet orange was not introduced into England till after the bitter variety, and the few allusions of the poets of the period last mentioned are to this and not the sweet fruit. Shakspeare, in "Much Ado About Nothing," says, "The Count is neither sad nor sick, nor merry nor well; but civil, Count, civil as an orange, and somewhat of that jealous complexion;" and Nash, a contemporaneous dramatist, uses the expression, "civil as an orange." In these passages, a pun, a very weak one, is obviously intended on the word "Seville," whence then, as now, the bitter oranges came.

Sir Walter Raleigh, "the father of tobacco," is credited with having brought oranges to England, and it is said that Sir Francis Carew, who married

his niece, planted their seeds and produced orange trees at Beddington, in Surrey, of which Bishop Gibson, in his additions to Camden's "Britannia," speaks as having been there for a hundred years previous to 1695. As these trees, however, always produced fruit, they could not, as Professor Martyn has observed, have been raised from seeds; but they may have been brought from Portugal or Italy as early as the close of the sixteenth century. The Beddington trees were planted in the open ground, but carefully protected during the winter months. At the beginning of the eighteenth century they had attained a height of eighteen feet, and the stems were about nine inches in diameter. In 1738 they were surrounded by a permanent enclosure, like a greenhouse; but they all perished during the "great frost" in the following winter.

At Hampton Court there are still many orange trees believed to be 300 years old. A tree at Versailles boasts to be 400 years old, having once belonged to the Constable de Bourbon, in the reign of Francis I., who was contemporary with our Henry VIII. In various parts of Europe trees are still in existence in large numbers which are certainly from 150 to 200 years old, and each year they produce more fruit, and of better quality.

In some parts of Spain a single tree frequently bears 3,000 to 4,000 oranges, and instances have been known of as many as 20,000 having been produced. The most interesting feature in the natural history of the orange tree is that it bears at one time what may be called three crops in different stages—the blossom, the immature fruit, and the ripe oranges.

In reference to the more prosaic aspect of oranges, as has been already remarked, the season of importation has recently commenced.

Our supply comes chiefly from St. Michael's, one of the Azores Islands; from Terceira and Fayal, also belonging to that group; from Valencia, and several other Spanish ports; from Lisbon, Villa Real, Aviero, and Oporto, and from Palermo, Malta, and other ports in the Mediterranean. The earliest arrivals are from Spain, Portugal, and Sicily, the famous St. Michael's oranges being a little later. Of these the first cargo of the latter was not due till about the 18th inst., and therefore notifications in shop windows, and street cries of "real St. Michaels" being on sale, were certainly premature. The St. Michael importation does not last much beyond the end of May, and this class of orange is at its perfection about Christmas, and then it is the best orange that can be got, though complaints are now heard in the trade that the St. Michael growers have of late rather grown for quantity than quality.

The St. Michaels are now brought to this country exclusively in steam ships, each carrying about 10,000 boxes; but a new vessel will be in the trade this season which will bring from 20,000 to 24,000. The boxes in this branch of the trade contain about 350 oranges in each, though they are not counted, as are the numbers sent in the boxes from Palermo and Valencia, the latter containing 420 or 490, and the former 200 of large and 360 of small fruit. Probably there are more oranges imported from Valencia than from all other ports together. The St.

Michaels are packed in the dried leaves of Indian corn, but all other oranges in paper.

The "blood" oranges, as they are called, come mostly from Valencia, but a few from Malta, from which latter place we also get the egg-shaped fruit. Both of these command much higher prices than ordinary consignments. The aromatic and delicious "Tangerines" hail from St. Michael's, and also from Lisbon, varying very considerably in price according to the supply. Seville oranges come from the place of that name, and, as every one knows, are used exclusively for making marmalade and orange wine. For both these purposes, however, the Palermo "bitters" are really better adapted; and it may not be generally known that the best marmalade of all is produced from the Shaddock—a sort of cross between an orange and a lemon, and named after a Captain Shaddock, who brought it from China, or, as some say, from Guinea, and planted it in the West Indies, where we now derive our limited supply. It is the bitter element in the Seville and Palermo oranges which fit them for marmalade, as it preserves the skins while they dry.

We need not be alarmed very much at the stories which are told of the orange peel being collected in the streets and at places of entertainment for marmalade purposes; for the skins of ordinary oranges, instead of drying, simply become rotten.

The great bulk of St. Michael and other oranges are landed at Fresh Wharf, Thames-street; but those from Lisbon generally in the London Docks. The fruit is shipped to London merchants, who advance large sums of money to the foreign growers, and then it passes at once into the hands of the brokers, who sell it by auction, holding sales from three to five times a week, according to the season. Pudding-lane, Thames-street, is their headquarters, and, if not quite an orange grove, is busy enough with the orange trade—long strings of white-stocked "fellowship" porters carrying the boxes almost all day long without intermission, during the busy season, from the riverside to the warehouses, and suggesting sometimes in the Billingsgate vernacular that strangers had better keep out of their way.

A large quantity of the fruit sold finds its way to Duke's-place, a quarter of the Hebrew region of Houndsditch, where it is resold to shopkeepers and costermongers. This locality is redolent of oranges, and it is no exaggeration to say you may often walk for yards there ankle-deep in decayed orange pulp and peel.

As it is a somewhat delicate subject to touch, it may be as well not to say anything about the price of oranges as realized at the brokers' sales; but a few statistics of the quantity imported may be interesting. Twenty years ago it was thought rather a wonderful thing that the metropolis should be supplied with one hundred millions of oranges yearly. There are now sold in Pudding-lane and its vicinity something like three or four times that quantity, of which by far the greater portion is consumed in the metropolitan district. The increase in the trade is due in a great measure to the abolition of the duty. Formerly 2s. 6d. per box was the impost; in 1853 it was reduced to 8d.; and altogether abolished in

1861. Last year 732,000 packages came to London, A steamer with 10,000 or 12,000 packages brings somewhat over one orange each to the three and a half million inhabitants of the metropolis. Glancing at importations to other ports, we find that last year Liverpool received 715,000 packages (a large portion of which were transhipped to America); Hull received 227,000; and Bristol 110,000.

If we add to these the packages received at minor ports, we shall have in round numbers nearly two million packages; and these again would represent something like a consumption in the United Kingdom of seven hundred million oranges annually. Every year is more than likely to see a large increase on these figures. Last year, according to a calculation made by the Board of Trade, there were imported of oranges and lemons together 3,533,781 bushels, representing a money value of £1,549,765 first hand.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER III.—"THERE HE IS!"

EARLY on the following morning the elephants were had out, in preparation for a tiger hunt, and there was great excitement in the little camp on the subject. The colonel's leave had been obtained by all the officers, and Ensign Payne was in a state of boyish delight that was almost infectious. The three most trustworthy and experienced of the elephants were chosen, and Payne had arranged to be in the same howdah with Captain Vaughan, whom he imagined a sort of hero of romance.

"You look most awfully grave about this affair, Vaughan," he said, entering the tent where the young captain was looking to the loading of his rifle. "Don't you care about going? There is nothing wrong, is there?"

"I shall enjoy the sport extremely," said Vaughan, evasively. "But it is rather horrible. We shall find the remains of that unfortunate coolie, if there are any left."

"I can't think what's come to the fellows this morning," grumbled the ensign. "First, there's Morley, who I thought was one of the easiest-tempered chaps going, turns as sulky as a bear when I said something about coming on the same animal with you two, and I could hardly get a word out of him. And now you look as though you were going to a funeral, instead of to join in the sport of sports—hunting the man-eater. But I say, seriously, you know, you don't think a fellow ought to feel cut up and that sort of thing about that accident last night? He was only a nigger, you know, and those things can't be helped, can they?"

"My dear boy," said Vaughan, "if I looked serious, it was because I have had bad news that had nothing to do with the present subject. I don't want to damp your enjoyment."

"Bad news," said Payne, looking concerned. "Is it about your sister?"

"Yes—no—yes. But you needn't say anything about it."

"All right. I see now how it is Morley was in the downs too. I hope it's nothing serious."

"Come along, I'm ready," said Vaughan; and they went out to where the elephants were having the howdahs lashed on. "It promises to be an overpowering day. I am going to speak to the colonel for a minute—I sha'n't be long."

He was admitted at once into Colonel Stafford's tent, to find himself face to face with Mabel.

"Papa has just gone out," she said, as they shook hands; "but I expect him back every minute. Mamma is not up yet."

"I shall not wait for him, as I dare say I can find him, and we are just off."

"And you are going after that dreadful tiger?" said the girl, who looked pale and troubled. "Is it not very dangerous?"

"Oh, no—not with proper care. And, you know, if we did not kill it, it would probably be here again to-night."

"Pray take care of yourself," she said, "and don't do anything rash."

"Thank you," he began, earnestly. "I—"

There was a step outside, and the colonel entered.

"Oh, you are here!" he said, glancing from one to the other, and smiling grimly as he saw the colour mount to Mabel's fair cheek. "They are waiting for you, I think."

Vaughan forgot entirely what he had come to say, and, with a hasty "Good-bye," went to join the others; for Mabel's look and words had taken him by surprise. He had imagined, after Morley's confession of the previous night, that his love was hopeless, for the probability of the other's offer meeting with a refusal had scarcely crossed his mind; but now he saw matters in a different light, and longed for an opportunity to tell the colonel's daughter how dear to him she was.

However, his resentment against Frank Morley was not in the least abated, there recurring to him at times a scene which had taken place more than two years ago in England.

He saw in imagination a small, slight, fair-haired, blue-eyed girl of eighteen, looking up with a sweet, trustful expression at a tall young officer, who looked down for a minute into the candid eyes, and then pressed his lips to hers. That officer was his friend Morley, and the girl, his sister Dora—his sister, and he was her only near relative. And now she was coming out to remain in the charge of Colonel and Mrs. Stafford until—and there Robert Vaughan came to a standstill, and ground his teeth with the remembrance of the news that was in store for her.

The party started directly he joined them, to take his place beside Ensign Payne, who tried hard, in spite of the difficulty of keeping up a conversation when experiencing a continuous series of jolts, to rouse him out of his melancholy mood, though his jokes could scarcely provoke a smile.

They followed the track for some time, there being plainly to be seen marks of blood on the herbage, which was broken down, and showed where the man's body had been dragged along; and after following these traces for some little distance, in an open part covered with long, marshy grass of three

or four feet high, they came upon the body, half-eaten, of the unfortunate coolie.

Payne looked rather white and faint at the sight.

"This won't do, you know, young fellow," said Vaughan; "if you can't stand a sight like that, how will you get on when your friends are falling round you thick and fast, and when cries and groans of agony are ringing in your ears?"

"Oh, you feel different then, don't you? You get excited, and don't think about those things."

The remains of the native were carried back by two or three of his friends, who had accompanied the beaters in the hope of finding his body; and now the hunt began in earnest.

The beaters divided into two parties, and took opposite directions to drive towards the elephants, which ceased to keep close together; and, as the tracks were no longer discernible after the place where the coolie was found, a sharp look-out was kept in every direction.

As the sun was now well up, the heat began to be very great, and Vaughan drew back his hand quickly, when it accidentally touched the iron-work of the howdah.

"I say, it *is* hot," said the ensign, wiping his brow. "There won't be any of me left, if it's long before the tiger turns up. Hallo! what on earth's the matter with Morley's elephant?"

In fact, that intelligent animal had set up a very unmusical squealing and trumpeting, which was at once echoed by the last of the three farther off.

"That means that our friend is not at any great distance," said Vaughan, who had joined in more than one hunt of this description before. "Keep your eye on the grass, and when you see it begin to wave and undulate, fire."

They moved on slowly, seeing nothing, until a shot was fired from Morley's howdah, and his elephant moved forward, though to the others the tiger was still invisible. Vaughan's and the other elephant started in pursuit, the mahouts goading them to the greatest speed they were capable of; but it was some time before they caught up to the first.

As they did so, Vaughan and his companion simultaneously perceived the tiger's head for an instant above the long grass, before it disappeared again, and its course was only to be traced by the waving reeds. It was unfortunately too far off for a trusty shot, and the elephants were urged on as they became disposed to lag. After a quarter of an hour's hard riding it became patent to all that there was no longer any movement to be discerned in advance.

A short consultation was held, and one of the mahouts offered his opinion that the animal had taken refuge in a patch of jungle they had left behind them. As no one remembered seeing the grass wave after they passed there, the elephants were turned, and they rode back. They were about to push into the underwood, when the sign of a moving body in the reeds became visible, taking exactly the direction from which they had come.

The pursuit began again, and was continued for nearly a mile, when they once more missed their quarry, finding directly after they had left it behind that the beast must have concealed himself in a

little thicket of trees and bushes, and once more taken the opposite direction.

"The next time I see where he is, I shall fire," said Payne, "even if it is too long a shot. This is awful work. I feel sure one or two of the party will die of sunstroke. There he is!"

The last exclamation was followed by a shot from his rifle.

"Missed, of course. Just my luck. But never mind, I'll make a hole in his skin yet, if only we come to close quarters."

"We may get into closer quarters than we like when he's brought to bay. As far as I could see, it is a fine old male, and he will be a dangerous customer to tackle. The older they are, the more obstinate they become."

"Look there," said Payne, after a minute or two. "They are both bearing round to the left. Let us go rather to the right, and then, perhaps, he may come our way."

Vaughan agreeing to this proposition, they communicated their intention to the mahout, and were soon putting a greater distance between themselves and the rest of the party.

"There is one disadvantage about this," said Vaughan, quietly, looking at his companion; "if the brute does come for us, and spring up to the howdah, we shall most likely be dependent on our guns, for they will in all probability be too far off to reach us in time to be any good. So, if you feel at all queer at the prospect, don't be afraid to say so, and we can rejoin them yet."

Payne burst out laughing.

"That is good. Why, it was my idea, wasn't it? And it's odd to me if you and I can't polish him off by ourselves."

They pushed on in silence for a time, and soon became aware, through the great feline head showing itself momentarily, that they were decidedly nearer than the others.

"Move to the right," said Vaughan to the mahout, and a little later the line of undulation came within easy range.

Both fired; and an angry snarl testified that the tiger was not untouched. He seemed at last to alter his tactics, and make straight for them, so that there was no doubt he was roused at last, and meant to take his revenge for this long pursuit.

Two more shots were fired, but it seemed without effect; for the handsome, lithe beast came on full swing for the elephant on the back of which Harry Payne and Captain Vaughan were both endeavouring to get a good aim at him. This, however, was a very difficult matter, as the elephant kept up a series of sudden movements, first one way and then another, at the same time giving vent to squeals of excitement or terror. The two young men fired at the same moment, but without stopping the tiger's advance.

Vaughan gave one quick glance at his companion, to see if he exhibited any signs of fear; but, on the contrary, he was cool and collected, the sparkle of his eye alone showing that he was aware of this danger.

"Let him come on," he said, without looking round, "and then we'll give it him hot."

Their companions were still at some distance, though approaching to their assistance; but it was evident they must be a few minutes reaching them, for the ground here was rugged and uneven; and the elephants would not be hurried, though their respective mahouts goaded them energetically.

"Look out, Vaughan!" cried the young ensign; and the next instant the tiger was scrambling up to the elephant's chest, its terrible claws tearing the poor brute's skin fearfully.

The attempts of the two young men to get a shot at it were quite useless, they having almost enough to do to keep themselves from being thrown out, in consequence of the violent endeavours to get rid of its assailant on the part of the elephant, which tried vainly to shake itself free, as it struck at the tiger with its trunk on the back and flank.

Vaughan felt that their position was a very perilous one; but that of the mahout was even more so, he calling out to them to fire, for the man-eater's claws were in reach of his legs.

Every movement, however, made this more impossible, as Vaughan and Payne had great difficulty in keeping themselves in the howdah, and the former was beginning to wish Morley would be quick to their aid, when their elephant, apparently in the hope of crushing or dislodging his foe, threw himself right over on his side.

The effects of this performance were startling. The mahout turned a complete somersault, and lodged in a tree, where he clung, shrieking for help with all the power of his lungs. Ensign Payne was flung to a distance, where he lay stunned and helpless. Vaughan fell heavily into the long, swampy grass, his rifle yards away, and for a minute there he crouched, not daring to move.

To complete the horror of the scene, the tiger, whose activity appeared little altered by the shots fired at it while in the reeds, now seemed to recover itself suddenly from its fall; and, crouching from where it had been thrown by the elephant, gathered itself up for a spring, crouched for a moment, and then, with a deafening roar, leaped right at Vaughan's chest.

CHAPTER IV.—"YOU SCOUNDREL, YOU WERE LISTENING!"

IT was a critical moment. None of the approaching party dared to fire, for fear of hitting Vaughan, who lay without motion. It was well he did so, for the least movement on his part would have resulted in his being torn to pieces.

What followed was the work of a few seconds. Morley, without pausing to think of the risk he ran, slipped from his howdah, and let himself glide to the ground. Recovering himself directly, he walked straight up to the tiger, which crouched with one paw on Vaughan's shoulder, as he approached, swearing like some gigantic cat. Placing the muzzle of his rifle to its ear, he fired, and the great beast rolled over, dead.

"Are you hurt, Vaughan?" asked more than one voice, as the young man sat up and looked round in a confused way.

"No, I think not much," he said, after a minute. "Where's Payne?"

"Here I am," said the ensign, who was leaning against a tree, looking rather white. "Has any one got some brandy?"

No one had thought of bringing any, and so the best thing to do seemed to be to get back to the encampment as quickly as possible.

The extent of the harm done was easily ascertained. Payne was bruised and shaken, but that was all, and he was soon quite himself again. Captain Vaughan, however, had not come off so well. He had one shoulder a good deal scratched by the claws of the tiger, but the wounds were not deep, and he made light of the whole matter, submitting somewhat unwillingly to the binding-up process, which was effected by means of two or three pocket handkerchiefs and the ensign's puggaree, which he insisted on taking off for the purpose.

The elephant still lay on its side, while its mahout unloosed those of the cords fastening the howdah which had not already given way. Relieved of its burden, it consented to rise; and, as it was a good deal torn about the chest, it was taken back as it was, leaving the howdah for the beaters to carry amongst them. Room was made for Vaughan and Payne on the other two elephants.

In this manner they returned to the palm tope, the tiger being carried behind them in triumph. On the way all the others congratulated Frank Morley on his "plucky" behaviour, more than one looking curiously at Vaughan, who kept a complete silence. He went straight to his tent the moment they reached the camp; but had not been there many minutes before the surgeon of the regiment made his appearance. He was a little, round man, with a bustling manner, and sharp, grey eyes.

"Let's look at the damage," he said, in a quick, abrupt way, that he seemed to have caught of the colonel.

"Why, Miller, who sent you here? I don't think it's bad enough to need you."

"Morley asked me to look in. H'm, I was afraid it was worse. It's unfortunate that we are to march to-morrow. You'll have to get a dooly to take you."

"I may yet be reduced to doing that some day," said Vaughan, laughing; "but it will be for something worse than a few scratches."

"Of course, I expected you to say that, though I don't see myself why it is better to keep the places from healing for days by exerting yourself than it is to be carried a short time, and then to be as right as ever. But it's always the way. You get me to look at you, and give you my advice, but you never take it, by any chance. I don't mean you alone, for you're all alike."

The examination and plaistering being concluded, the doctor sat down for a smoke with his patient, and listened with interest to the young man's account of the morning's sport.

"Then, if I understand you rightly," he said, at the conclusion, "you owe your life to Morley's coolness."

"Yes. It was a narrow escape, no doubt," said Vaughan, thoughtfully. "It is very unfortunate."

"What is?" asked the other, staring.

"Did I speak aloud? I was only thinking."

As he offered no further elucidation of the remark, the doctor relapsed into silence, and pondered deeply. He soon after took his leave, with strict injunctions to Vaughan to remain in the tent the rest of the day, departing under the mistaken impression that for once the advice would be taken. The young man, however, had not heard a word of what he was saying, for, as Dr. Miller gave his last directions while in the act of going out, Vaughan had caught sight of Morley approaching, and was wondering how to meet him.

He came in almost directly, and, without taking any notice of Vaughan, sat down and began writing a letter.

For some time neither spoke. At last, Morley looked up.

"Have you heard the news that came in our absence?"

"No; but before you say more, let there be a clear understanding between us."

He paused an instant, and then continued, coldly and firmly, "You saved my life this morning, and I thank you, though Heaven knows I would rather be indebted to any man on earth for it than to you. However, now, of course, there can be no more question of your giving me the satisfaction I intended to have required from you. I only ask one thing of you, that you tell her yourself, when she comes, what was the worth of the promises in which she trusted, and what a villain he is who made them."

Morley started up angrily.

"Hang it all, Vaughan, I can stand a good deal, but this is too much. Who are you, that you should judge my conduct like this? I could no more help loving Mabel Stafford than you. A man's heart is not in his own power, to keep or lose at will."

"No, but his honour is," said the other, bitterly, as he left the tent.

He strode out among the tall, pillar-like trees, with the indignation he felt plainly to be seen in his face; and after walking for some ten minutes, scarcely heeding where he was going, he looked up, and saw Mabel's white dress at a little distance, for she was sitting under a tree, book in hand. He hurried towards her, and took a vacant chair that was by her side.

"Are you not rash to come out?" she asked, glancing at his shoulder. "Dr. Miller said he had told you to keep quiet."

"Oh, it's nothing," said he, almost impatiently; "I had forgotten it. Has not the colonel had news while we were away this morning?"

"Have you not heard, then? I thought Captain Morley would have told you."

"Told me what, Miss Stafford?"

"That the sepoy of the fort of Bahadoorpore have all risen and murdered their officers, and the women and poor little children. Oh," she said, shuddering, "it is too horrible! And we fear that Dora and her party would expect to stop there on the route. How I wish she were here!"

Vaughan got up, and took a few steps to and fro on the dried, dusty grass.

"Mabel," he said, stopping before her, "suppose that these horrors come nearer us—that ere long

every man who now dawdles away existence in smoking, drinking, and talking has to be up in arms and fighting in the midst of dangers, may I think that there is one, nearer and dearer even than Dora, for whom to struggle, and who will reward my endeavours with her hand?"

"Pray say no more, Captain Vaughan," said Mabel, in an agitated tone; "this is not a time or place for such words as these."

"I must speak, and why not here? There is no one near enough to overhear, and I have waited long for this opportunity. Do not refuse to hear me. My peace—the happiness of my whole life depends upon your answer. I never thought of love till I saw you, and I should have spoken to you long ere this—weeks, nay, months since—but I was afraid you would think me presumptuous and bold. Speak, Mabel. Will you send me from you with all my hopes crushed, or say that which will keep me at your side, a happy man?"

Mabel raised her eyes to his, regarded him earnestly for a minute, and then, with lips quivering, held out her hand. He took it, and kissed it tenderly.

"Heaven bless you, Mabel!" he said, in a low voice. "I scarcely dared hope for this."

"I must go in now," she said, the next minute. "Mamma will wonder where I am."

He was about to follow her, as she walked back towards the colonel's tent, when he caught a glimpse of a black face peering from behind a tree close at hand. He started forward, and was in time to grasp the white garment of one of the natives, whom, on a closer inspection, he recognized as Patan, one of the colonel's kelassies, or tent pitchers.

"You scoundrel!" said Vaughan, shaking him furiously, "you were listening."

The man turned on him a scowl of rage.

"What! you dare to threaten me? Be off, you scoundrel; and if I catch you listening again, you won't get off so easily."

Muttering something in his own language between his teeth, the native turned and fled, just as Mabel Stafford, who had seen nothing of this incident, disappeared into the tent.

Vaughan stood for a few minutes thoughtfully looking at the ground, until he was joined by Payne.

"How are you, Vaughan? Is the shoulder better?"

"Better? Oh, I had quite forgotten it. Now you mention it, well—it is rather painful. By the bye, did you see that kelassie running off just before you came?"

"Yes, what about him?"

"I shook him for getting behind that tree and listening to a conversation; and he half drew a knife. I never knew such a thing occur before. The spying was bad enough by itself."

"Pooh, I shouldn't think anything of that. He was drunk, very likely."

"Perhaps; but I can't help thinking it looks queer. The natives are generally so extremely servile, and show such extreme subjection, that it seems rather extraordinary. I shall mention it to the colonel."

"Do what you like, but I shouldn't if I were you. I say, have you and Morley quarrelled?"

Vaughan coloured, and forced a laugh.

"Why? Are you thinking of becoming peace-maker in that case?"

"I thought you were such awful chums."

"My dear Harry, when you are as old as I am, you will have learnt not to be surprised at anything. There are things happen one day which the day before you would have staked your life could never come to pass. At least, so I have found it. But never mind that. Have you felt any the worse for the morning's adventure?"

"Not the least. That reminds me, the colonel wants you to go to his tent for a rubber of whist to-night, and give him your version of the affair. Say, Vaughan, I'm awfully sorry about your sister."

"What about her?" said Vaughan, starting, and looking at him sharply.

"That she hasn't come, and we start at two in the morning. What should I mean?"

"Oh, yes, of course. But I hardly expected she could be here so soon. I wish to heaven she were."

"Is she pretty?"

"She is one of the sweetest, best little women that ever lived, and that's better than being pretty; but she has a fair share of good looks into the bargain."

"Morley's a lucky dog, isn't he?"

Vaughan turned suddenly, and strode off down the line of tents, leaving Payne staring after him with an expression of the utmost astonishment.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "I never saw anything to equal that. What on earth has Morley done that he won't even hear his name mentioned? I'll go and see what I can get out of him."

Drowning and Swimming.

A REPORT has just been issued by the Home Office. It consists of a record "of all deaths from drowning in the inland waters of England and Wales during 1877, distinguishing men, women, and children; and also whether the deaths occurred (1) in rivers or running water, (2) in canals, (3) in lakes or ponds." The figures are, even when allowance is made for the proportion which they bear to the total of our national population, somewhat startling. It appears that during last year there were held in England and the Principality no fewer than two thousand six hundred and sixty-two inquests on the bodies of persons who had met with their deaths by drowning.

In the country, children are apt to get astray, and tumble into wells, or old gravel-pits, or deep river holes, or canals with slippery banks of clay, and are then never heard of or seen again. In the Thames, too, and in our other large tidal rivers, a very considerable per-centage of the bodies of those who are drowned are swept away out to sea, or entangled in mud and slush, or in fragments of wreckage at the bottom of the stream, and so remain unaccounted for in the grim list of the coroners' returns. We now know for certain that of those who were drowned when the ill-fated *Princess Alice* sank there are many whose bodies have either been carried miles away, or are lying sunk in the dreary Thames

reaches. We consequently are, in all probability, within, rather than beyond, the reasonable margin if we assume that in England and Wales alone at least three thousand people meet with a violent death from drowning every year.

We find, to begin with, that two thousand one hundred and forty males have been drowned as against five hundred and twenty-two females. This is only what might be expected. The ordinary vocations of women do not expose them to any constant risk from water. Men navigate steamers, and barges, and lighters, and act as stevedores, and are, consequently, in perpetual hazard. Then, too, of the deaths among men, a large number is probably due to accidents while bathing, or boating, or fishing—from which women are practically exempt.

Then, again, of the five hundred and twenty-two women whose deaths are returned, it is, unfortunately, probable that somewhat more than half have committed suicide. Indeed, all that the return from this point of view shows is, that those who are employed in and about the water run far greater risk of drowning than do those who are occupied on shore. Nor is much to be learned from the subdivision of the report into deaths in running water, in canals, and in lakes. Running waters claim one thousand four hundred and twenty-three victims, canals six hundred and thirty-seven, and lakes and ponds seven hundred and two. These totals speak for themselves. Running waters include, of course, tidal rivers, where shipping is frequent and accidents connected with shipping numerous.

Lakes and ponds come next in order, partly because the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland are exceptionally dangerous, and partly because the term "pond" must be presumed also to include "reservoir;" and in the manufacturing districts, where there are large reservoirs for the storage of water, a certain number of casualties among bathers and boating parties is more or less a matter of annual necessity. As between the different sexes and ages, too, the figures are very much what might have been expected. In running waters nine hundred and one males over twelve, and one hundred and sixty-five females of the same age, have lost their lives.

The number of little girls under twelve who tumble into the water and are drowned varies very little in different localities. Seventy-one such deaths have occurred in rivers, forty in canals, and sixty-five in lakes and ponds. The figures, upon the whole, bear a reasonable proportion to the actual area of water and extent of margin available for an accident, and the higher proportionate per-centage written down against canals is due, no doubt, to the fact that in all poor and populous suburban districts the canal bank is a favourite playing-ground for the children of the poor.

Of lads under twelve, two hundred and eighty-six have lost their lives in rivers, one hundred and fifty in canals, and one hundred and ninety-three in ponds and lakes. As far as anything can be gathered from them, the totals would seem to indicate that bathing in ponds or reservoirs is exceptionally hazardous. On the whole, it may be regretted that the return did not go further into detail. It would be most interesting could we know of the two thousand six

hundred and sixty-two deaths actually recorded how many were cases of suicide, how many accidents in the course of actual work and labour, how many due to boat accidents, and how many to accidents while bathing.

The general effect of the return is once more to impress upon us the necessity of swimming. Of the six hundred and twenty-nine lads under the age of twelve who are reported as drowned during last year, in all probability not one in twenty was able to swim. Of accidents in what may be called fresh or inland water, the majority, as we have said, occur to men in the actual pursuit of their trade or calling.

Next in order of fatality come boating accidents; bathing—especially in summer time—ranks next; and lastly figure what may be termed miscellaneous accidents, such as skating or fishing casualties, or accidental falls from the bank. In almost all such cases the power to swim for a quarter of a mile would in all human probability prove sufficient to save life. A boy employed about a ship in tidal water is sent aloft, or has to climb out along the bowsprit; his footing or his grasp fails him; and in a minute the tide has carried him fifty yards away. If he can swim he is in no danger; a boat will overtake him in a few minutes. If he cannot swim he will be exhausted before a boat can be so much as launched or a life-buoy thrown to him. For bathers, swimming is even more necessary, especially in rivers. In the glorious August weather, when the temperature is almost tropical, and the water deliciously cool and inviting, it is impossible by any enactments, however severe, to keep boys out of the water. Wherever a chance of a bathe offers itself in a river, in a reservoir, in a canal, or even in a muddy old duckpond, there they will collect by dozens.

For those who cannot swim fresh water is more dangerous than salt, in proportion as it is less buoyant; and so fully is this fact recognized, that at all our public schools bathing, except in a staked-out shallow, is always prohibited until a swimming test has been passed. No more wholesome rule could possibly be enforced. A lad ought to swim as naturally, easily, and with as little hesitation, as he climbs a tree, handles a cricket-bat, throws a stone, or jumps a ditch. Strange as it may seem, none of these are natural exercises of the body, as walking may be said to be. They are acquired by practice, and by practice only. The town-bred lad cannot climb a rope, and the sailor boy is no adept with the cricket-bat. But to make the boy proficient, all that is necessary is early practice, and it almost seems as if parents had, until recently, forgotten that swimming is an art upon which life may at any moment depend. It is no exaggeration to say that it is quite as much a duty to a lad to teach him to swim as to teach him the Rule of Three—and more so, indeed, when we recollect that the Rule of Three can, by attention and assiduity, be mastered at any period of life, whereas if a boy cannot swim by the time he is twelve, the probability is that he will never be able to swim any good distance at all.

The English are slow in adopting new ideas; but

within the last few years the necessity for teaching swimming has fortunately become more generally recognized. Swimming drill is part of the routine at a very considerable number of board schools. At our public schools not only is there, as a rule, a competent swimming master, but not to swim is considered a disgrace, and boys acquire the art, or pick it up, out of emulation and proper pride. In another generation it will be, probably, as strange a thing for a young Englishman to be ignorant of swimming as for a Mexican to be unable to control an unruly horse.

Nature and Art.

AN extraordinary experiment is reported, one which, however, has proved successful. It is usual in cases of broken or fractured limbs to get the bones united, and various methods have been tried to bring about this result. Dr. A. Patterson, of Glasgow Western Infirmary, before whom a case of this nature was brought, introduced a portion of the bone of a dog for the purpose of uniting and solidifying the fractured bones. The circumstances of the case are extremely interesting.

A marine engineer, whilst at sea, in January, 1873, sustained a simple fracture of both bones of the left fore-arm, about an inch and a half above the wrist joint. The arm was put up in splints, and kept up for some weeks. On the removal of the apparatus, it was found that the bones had not united. The man did not reach land until eight months after the accident, and was admitted to the Glasgow Infirmary, with the still un-united bones, in October, 1873—nine months after the accident. Three separate operations were performed without the bones having been united. In August, 1874, the man was re-admitted for the purpose of having amputation performed. The hand and lower part of the arm below the fracture were then hanging and swinging about, perfectly powerless. Although amputation was unanimously recommended by the surgical authorities of the infirmary, Dr. Patterson was accorded permission to make any possible attempt he chose at saving the limb.

The patient was, on the 14th September, placed under the influence of chloroform, while at the same time a retriever dog was being anæsthetised. Cutting down upon the ends of the fractured bone, and removing the fibrous band which alone formed the bond of union, the rounded points were removed by the saw, and a hole drilled obliquely through each squared end. This process was repeated on both sides of the arm, when it was found that an interspace of about three-quarters of an inch existed between the two fragments. In the meantime, one of the senior students, and a very clever manipulator, had exposed the humerus of the quadruped completely denuded of every tissue except the periosteum. The length of the bone was accurately measured (three-quarters of an inch), while from half an inch beyond the end of the necessary length the periosteal covering was rapidly but carefully dissected, the bone sawn through, a hole drilled in either end obliquely, as in the bone in the arm, where it was at once placed and fitted accu-

ately. Wires having been passed through the holes, the bones were firmly tied together. The wound was stitched with silver wire, the bone sutures coming out at each end of the incision. The entire operation was conducted under the carbolic acid spray. The arm was put up in gauze, and held in two rectangular splints.

After the operation there was a slight tendency to sickness, which was relieved by ice. On the 15th the wound was dressed, and one or two of the stitches removed, as there were signs of tension and a slight blush around the sutures. Tincture of opium (twenty-five minims) was given to induce sleep. By the 3rd November a union had taken place, and the wires were removed on the 28th of the same month. Shortly after this the patient resumed his former occupation, at which he is still engaged. He remains in perfect health, and retains a very useful arm. Thinking of Ollier's experiments with the periosteum, of the transplantation of skin from an amputated limb to ulcers, and of the transference of the mucous membrane of the rabbit to the human eye, Dr. Patterson says "he had some hope that the strange bone might have found a new home for itself in the human arm; failing which I knew it would secure perfect alignment of, and steadiness in, the ulnar fragments. Should a similar case occur again, I should adopt the same process, still hoping that the two bones might become one."

The Voices of Birds.

AN interesting article in a recent number of *Scribner's Monthly* is devoted to a comparison of American with British ornithology, in respect to the habits and song of relative species of birds. The writer thinks that European birds, generally, have more vivacity and power, but less melody and plainness than American birds; that they are more hardy and pugnacious, and are characterized by greater prominence of type.

The familiarity of British birds with artificial sounds is suggested as a possible cause for their notes having become more harsh and unmusical than those of the denizens of the forest. The writer contends that all purely wild sounds are plaintive, even to the war-cry of the savage; and asks, "Where could the English house sparrow have acquired that unmusical voice but amid the sound of hoofs and wheels and the discords of the streets? The English sparrow is a street *gamin*, our bird a timid rustic." That is true, but their bird is tolerably distinct from ours.

Nevertheless, the ideas expressed in the article are very suggestive, and it is quite possible that contact with man has modified and changed the tones of animals' voices. Birds are great imitators, and the faculty of mimicry is abnormally developed under confinement and domestication. In the vast solitudes of the American forests there are no sounds but those of nature, pure and simple, and which the writer in *Scribner* describes as "plaintive and elusive;" therefore he may be correct in his hypothesis that the tones of American song birds have been derived from them.

But it must not be forgotten that the circum-

stances of life have modified the habits as well as, probably, the voices of birds. It is stated that British birds are more familiar and domesticated than those of America, and that more of them build about houses, towers, and out-buildings. Doubtless this is so; but the reason may probably be found in the fact of there being comparatively so few of such haunts of man in America.

The writer would, doubtless, admit that there are exceptions to the general rule he has laid down respecting the soft and plaintive tones of the American birds; but in the main he may be correct. Some of his statements, however, are inaccurate; as for instance, speaking of British birds, he says, "They have several species like our robin; thrushes like him, and some of them larger, as the ring-ouzel, the missel thrush, the fieldfare, the throistle, the redwing, White's thrush, the rock thrush, the blackbird; these, besides several species in size and habits more like our wood thrush."

Now, of the thrushes mentioned, the fieldfare and the redwing are winter visitors; the ring-ouzel, a summer visitor; White's thrush, a rare and occasional visitor; and the rock thrush has only occurred once, May, 1843. We have no other thrush besides the three natives—the blackbird, missel thrush, and song thrush—except the water ouzel, while there are several other species like the wood thrush of America. Again, our song thrush is smaller than the American robin, if Wilson's measurement is correct—namely, 9½ inches in length—and the redwing is smaller than the song thrush. The writer also states that the blackbird will "sometimes crow like a cock and cackle like a hen," which may be true of the bird in confinement, but it does not convey a correct idea of the notes or habits of this shy bird; neither will many agree with him that the whitethroat has a "disagreeable" note.

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Dutch the Diver:

The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A DEADLY STRUGGLE.



IN an instant Dutch sprang upon the man who had fallen through, held his knife at his throat, and hissed—

"If you stir, you're a dead man. Stand ready to strike down the next man who comes through," he added to his friends.

"Who's a-going to stir?" said a surly voice. "I'm too beat out. There, you needn't be skeared; no one else won't come down that way."

"Oakum!" exclaimed Dutch, taking his knee from the prostrate man's chest.

"I aint quite sure yet," said the old fellow. "It was me—what them warmint had left; but you've most squeezed out the little bit of breath as I had."

"My good fellow," exclaimed the captain, "I'm very glad you've escaped. Are you wounded?"

"I'm blessed if I know, cap'n," growled the old fellow, rising and shaking himself. "I'm precious sore all over, and pumped out; but I can't feel any holes in my carkidge as yet. How's every one here?"

"Unhurt, at present," was the reply.

"Got the ladies safe?"

"Yes."

"That's a blessing!" muttered the old fellow.

"But who has been killed?" whispered Dutch, in a low voice.

"Well, that's about what I was going to ask you, gentlemen," said Oakum. "Far as I can make out, there's the whole of the watch. Bob Lennie—"

"Some one hit me on the nose, and tumbled me down the hatch, first go off," growled that worthy.

"That's good," said Sam. "Well, then, they've done for Dick Rolls, I know."

"No they aint," said the sailor, in an injured tone. "I got a chop on the head, and it's bleeding fine, and I bolted down here. Where's the good o' you going and telling such lies, Mr. Sam Oakum?"

"Well, third time never misses," muttered Sam. "What's come o' Mr. Jones?"

There was no reply here.

"He wouldn't jyne the mutineers, would he?" said Sam, after a pause.

"No," said the captain, sternly.

"Then it was him as they've cut down and chucked overboard."

"Where are the other men?" said the captain, after a horrified pause, caused by Sam Oakum's announcement.

"Them as aint in the swim is down in the focksle," said Sam, gruffly, "with all the chain cable piled atop on 'em, I expect; but it seemed to me as if the deck was swarming in the dark with fellows all a trying to let daylight into your ribs."

The silence on the deck now seemed ominous to those who were listening intently for some warning of the enemy coming down; but the long, weary hours passed without any fresh alarm, and they all stood in that pitchy darkness and stifling heat, waiting for the danger that did not come.

"I'm getting so anxious about my birds," said Mr. Wilson suddenly, from one corner of the cabin. "How shall I get to feed them?"

No one spoke for a moment or two, and then Sam Oakum exclaimed—

"You won't want no more birds, sir. You're agoing to be kep' in a cage yourself;" and the two sailors tittered to themselves, but no one else spoke.

"I say," exclaimed Oakum, all at once, "what's come o' the stooard and old Pollo?"

"I'm here, Mr. Oakum, sir," said a weak voice; and then there was a low wailing noise.

"That's old fatty, sure enough," said Oakum; "and he's a-crying. But what's come of Pollo?"

There was no answer to this, and Sam was heard to bring his hand down on his leg with a vigorous slap.

"I remember now," he exclaimed. "They brought him down on the deck when they went at me; but it was all knocked out of my head. Poor old Pollo! Poor old chap! I liked his honest old black physog somehow, if it wouldn't wash white. If he's killed," he muttered sternly, between his teeth, "some one's got to answer for it afore long."

The hours dragged on, and then it seemed as if the darkness had suddenly grown less opaque; then one haggard face and then another could be dimly made out, and at last, as if with a rush, up came the sun, and the saloon was flooded with

light reflected through the windows off the glorious dancing water; and the prisoners began to look from one to the other, and always at haggard, anxious faces.

Dutch, finding that all was still outside, walked softly to the little cabin, where Bessy Studwick and his wife had been placed for safety; and as the door was open, he could see that Hester was sleeping peacefully with her head resting on her friend's lap, while, pale and anxious looking, Bessy held one of her hands, and sat up watchful as she had been all night.

Dutch stole in, and bending down kissed his wife's forehead tenderly, making her start slightly and utter a long sigh; but a happy smile came upon her lip directly, and the sunshine which flooded the little cabin lit up her thin, worn face, giving it so sweet and pure an air that Dutch groaned to himself as he thought of the past, and then stole away, but with a load taken from his breast, as he thought of the revelation he had heard from the doctor, and his heart leaped with joy as he thought of how in the future he would try to wipe away the misery he had inflicted upon the suffering woman.

He was brought back to the present, though, directly, by finding a kind of conference going on amongst his friends as to the future, and the proceedings they must take to defend themselves, and retake the ship.

The meagreness of the resources was now seen at a glance, for though a portion of the party was pretty well armed, the others were helpless.

The captain made a full inspection of his cabin, to find that nearly every weapon had been carefully removed; and, to make matters worse, not an article likely to be used as a means of defence, saving some powder and cartridges, had been left behind.

At least, this was the first impression; but the doctor suddenly remarked that he had a stick in his cabin, and running in, he returned with it, and handed his keen long diver's knife to Oakum.

"You'd better keep it, sir," said the old fellow, contemptuously. "Them chaps has got heads and hearts too hard to be hurt with a bit of a stick. Oh, that's the game, is it? Well, I'll keep the knife, then."

This remark was made on seeing Mr. Meldon draw a long, keenly-pointed three-edged sword out of the stick, a weapon likely to prove fatal to any one upon whom it was used.

Unfortunately for the defenders of the cabin, they had but little with which they could make a barricade. There was the bedding, and a few chairs; but even if these were piled up, but little could be done, as Dutch pointed out to the captain in a low voice.

"I am no judge of fortifications," he said, with a bitter smile; "but look up."

The captain glanced at the skylight, and stamped with vexation.

"We have only one or two pistols, Captain Studwick, and the enemy have only to place three or four there to fire down upon us, and we are done for."

"Would you give up, then, Pugh?" said the captain, sternly.

"Not so long as I can strike a blow," was the reply; and the same spirit seemed to nerve all present.

There was not much time left them for consideration, for it was evident that full preparations were going on above. Voices were heard talking and orders being given; but the men kept away from the broken skylight, and the suspense grew more intense.

It was during this interval that Mr. Meldon went to the inner cabin, where, weak and feverish, John Studwick now lay, watched over by his sister and Hester Pugh, who seemed to have awakened to a new life as she exchanged glances once more with her husband, the trials they were now in seeming as nothing compared to the horrors of the past.

As the doctor approached, the young man turned to him impatiently.

"Well, he said, "have you come to make me strong, so that I can fight these scoundrels with you?"

"I wish I could," was the quiet reply.

"Bah! Doctor's talk," said John Studwick, bitterly. "You know you can do me no good. Why do you pester me?"

"Don't speak to me like that," he replied. "I have tried my best to help you."

"Yes, yes, I know. But there, go. You worry me by staying, and this heat makes me so weak."

"Yes, I will go directly," said the doctor; but he first went to the cabin window, secured a piece of string to a cloth, and lowered it down, soaking it, and drew it up.

As he did so a good-sized shark turned over and made a snap at the white, moving cloth, and the doctor shuddered, for it seemed to him that any attempt to escape from the ship to the shore would be in vain; for, as if in anticipation of coming carnage, the sharks were gathering round the doomed ship.

"Lay that upon his forehead, Mrs. Pugh," he said, quietly; and, as she turned to the locker upon which the young man lay, Mr. Meldon hastily caught Bessy's hand in his, and held it.

"I shall fight for you to the last," he said, in a low whisper. "Do not think ill of me for speaking now; but, Bessy, I love you—very dearly, and—and we may never meet again. Say one kind word to me before I go."

She snatched her hand from his hastily, and looked upon him in a scared manner; for just then her brother rose, saying—

"I cannot fight, but I can load for you;" and pale as a ghost, but quite calm, he leant upon his sister's arm; while she looked quite pale and calm, like the sea of a still morning before the sun rises.

"There's something to fight for there," said Rasp in Sam's ear.

"Why didn't they all stop at home?" he growled. "Just look what a mess they've got themselves in through being aboard ship, which is the last place as they should be in."

"Oh! dear," groaned the steward.

"Don't stand groaning there, sir," cried the cap-

tain; "here, quick, go and get what powder there is from my cabin. Now, gentlemen, let's do what we can here."

They went on piling up hammocks and bedding to keep the mutineers off, and to have something to fight from behind. Sam Oakum was doing all he could, after thrusting a good charge of powder and a whole handful of small shot into his pistol, when Dutch beckoned to him and whispered: "Go and see why he don't come back; it's time to be on the alert, for they are moving on deck."

Oakum stepped lightly off—his feet being bare, making no noise on the planks—when coming upon the steward quickly, he saw him just putting down a water-can, and he turned round, looking pale as a sheet, as he said: "It's no use, my lad; resistance would be vain, for they've contrived to wet what powder we had. Look at it."

He pointed to the little keg and a small case of cartridges, and sure enough they were all dripping wet, while it seemed rather surprising that the wetting looked so fresh. But he did not say so, only that Mr. Pugh hoped he'd make haste.

"Curse Mr. Pugh!" he muttered; and then he went on first, and Oakum followed with his cheeks blown out, as if he was going to whistle, but he made no sound.

"I fear that we must give up, gentlemen," he said, "for the powder is all wet."

"Who talks of giving up?" cried John Studwick, his pale face flushing up as he spoke, and holding one hand to his side. "Do you call yourselves men to hint at such a thing? I am no man now, only a broken, wasted shadow of a man, or, by the God who made me, I'd strike you down! Look at these women, men! think of their fate if those scoundrels get the upper hand—completely—Mr. Meldon—you—as a gentleman—my sister—God help—"

The poor young fellow staggered, and would have fallen, for the blood was trickling down upon his shirt front—gushing from his lips; but Mr. Meldon saved him, springing forward as a cry burst from Bessy; and he was laid upon a mattress in one of the cabins fainting—dying, it seemed.

Then there was a murmur of such a nature that the steward found he must make some show of a fight, or it would be done without him; and, accordingly, he took hold of a very blunt cutlass, looking pale, but making believe to tuck up the wristband of his shirt, to have free play for killing six or seven of the mutineers.

"Look here," whispered Oakum to Rasp, "had we been well armed—numbers being about equal—I don't think we should have had much the worst of it."

Sam had a pretty good jack-knife; and not having much faith in the pistol, he was about to trust to the bit of steel, the same as Rolls, who had one with a spring back and a good seven-inch blade, so he turned to Mr. Meldon—

"P'raps you'd like the pistol, sir."

The doctor took it quietly and earnestly, tapping the back, to make sure the powder was up to the nipple.

"That's in the right hands, anyhow," muttered Sam.

"Are you ready?" cried the skipper. For they

were evidently collecting up above, and some one fired a pistol down the skylight, but no one was hit.

"Not quite, sir," said Oakum. "Steward, suppose you hand out some of them knives o' yours; and I'll trouble you for the big beef carver, as I spoke first."

Dutch turned round and smiled at him; and Sam gave him a nod, turned up his sleeve, and then laid hold of the big carver, which did not make such a bad weapon, being new, sharp-pointed, and stiff.

"Pile more mattresses and hammocks up," said Dutch. Then the doctor gave one look towards where John Studwick was lying, and ran across, as if to see how he was; but he hurriedly caught hold of Miss Studwick's hand, and while he spoke, as she drew her hand hastily away, she gave a strange, frightened look at him.

What she would have said was checked by a sharp cry from the captain.

"Quick, all!" he shouted; "they are coming."

The doctor rushed back into the little saloon, and he was only just in time; for the door had been quietly unfastened from without, and, headed by Lauré, armed to the teeth, the enemy, to the number of eight, suddenly appeared, and the two sides stood face to face.

"There, throw down those knives," he said, in a sharp voice, "fools and idiots! The tables are turned now. Parkley, Pugh, you little thought that my day would come, but it has. Come, surrender!"

There was no reply by words; and the Cuban read the intention of those he sought to master by their determined front.

"Do you want to be shot down where you stand?" he cried.

"Better than trust to the mercies of such a scoundrel as you," cried Dutch, passionately.

"Ah, my brave diver and shark slayer, are you there? Put down that weapon, I don't want you hurt; nor you neither, master Rasp, for you have to work for me." There was no reply for a moment or two, and then Dutch spoke to the men who were with the Cuban.

"I warn you all," he said; but as he spoke he could see that he was addressing men who were infuriated with drink. "I warn you all that we are desperate, and shall fight to the last. Come over to our side, and help to secure that scoundrel, and you shall all be richly rewarded. Fight for him, and if you escape death now, the law must overtake you for piracy, and you will be hung."

There was a loud laugh at this, and the captain whispered—

"Shall we make a bold charge?"

"No, stand firm," said Dutch; and the little poorly armed party closed up more determinedly.

"What does that mean?" thought Dutch, as, at a word from the Cuban, three of the men ran back up the cabin steps.

His answer came almost directly.

"Will you surrender?" cried Lauré, savagely.

"No," was the reply.

"Then your blood be upon your own heads," he yelled. "Fire!"

He raised his own revolver as he spoke, and

began to fire shot after shot at those before him; while at the same moment three shots came crashing from behind them through the skylight.

Then, headed by the Cuban, the enemy dashed into the cabin, striking right and left with the cutlasses with which they were armed, and for a few minutes there was a desperate struggle, in which for the time, though weakened by two of their men going down at the first shots, and others being wounded, the cabin party held their own, every one fighting manfully; but the three men who had been sent to fire through the skylight came shouting down to reinforce their comrades, and thus turned the scale.

The captain went down with a terrible cut across the forehead; Mr. Parkley had a bullet through the shoulder. The doctor drove his sword through one of the scoundrels, and then it broke short off, while another stabbed him in the back.

Lauré then upon Sam Oakum, but he was too quick for him; and, as the old sailor jumped aside, the Cuban's cutlass hit the bulkhead, and broke short off.

It would have gone hard with Lauré then, for the knife the old fellow had was sharp, and his blood was up; but they were separated, and two of the piratical scoundrels attacked him, giving Oakum all the work he could do to keep them at a distance.

He was as active, though, as a younger man, and chopping one of them across the hand, he sent him off, cursing his ill-luck. With Sam's next blow, the next fellow was struck heavily in the chest, and went down like a stone; but to Oakum's great surprise, he found that he had only struck the man with the buckhorn handle, the blade having fallen out.

There was no time to choose who should be the next enemy in the general mêlée, and though Oakum and Rasp both fought hard, they were driven here and there, the planks becoming slippery with blood, and men wounded or stunned lying about to trip the others up.

As for Dutch, he singled out Lauré, and made a desperate attack upon him with his long, keen knife, the shot the Cuban fired at him having merely grazed his neck; but directly after they were separated in the struggle, as the furious knot of combatants swayed to and fro. But he rid himself of another antagonist, and seizing the cutlass with which he was armed, again made at the Cuban.

As he approached, Lauré raised his revolver once more, took steady aim, and was about to fire; but, regardless of this, Dutch struggled to get at him, when a wild shriek from a voice he knew made him turn for a moment, and that threw him off his guard. Poor Hester had been a horrified witness of the struggle, and had seen Lauré's deadly aim. Till that moment her lips had been sealed, but now the involuntary cry escaped her, and as Dutch turned, the shot struck him on the shoulder, fortunately only ploughing a shallow flesh-wound; but the next moment a blow from another hand struck him down, and the rest being mastered, the men, by Lauré's orders, dragged out two injured comrades, and securing the weapons, left the slippery cabin and secured the door.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—RENEGADES.

WHEN Dutch recovered his senses, it was to find his head resting in his wife's lap, and the doctor busily engaged in bandaging his wounds; and as the misty sense of wonder, passed off, a feeling of thankfulness came upon him, and he pressed the little soft hand that held his, for his great horror had been lest Hester should have fallen into Lauré's hands. The joy he felt was heightened, too, by seeing Bessy Studwick there as well, busily attending her father, and then going from one to the other, carrying water, for the heat was terrible, and the wounds caused a thirst that was almost maddening. But, painful as they were, not one man had received mortal injury; and the doctor's words were more healing even than his bandages.

When Sam came to again, his head was aching awfully, and he found himself lying upon the deck, with Bob Lennie dabbing his forehead with a wet swab. Close beside him was Rasp, and the sight of him alive did him so much good that he jumped up into a sitting position, and gave his hand a good shake. But it was for all the world like having boiling lead poured from one side to the other of his head; and he was glad to lean against the bulkhead again.

There were half-a-dozen of the crew keeping watch, while Rasp whispered that six bodies had been thrust out of the port. As to the rest, the captain's seemed the worst wound; but he, poor fellow, was sitting up, pale and anxious, with his handkerchief tied round his head.

Some hours passed, and then the cabin door was opened, and food and water carried in by three of the men; and then, with Lauré fully armed behind him, came Pollo, who, with swab and pail, was ordered to remove the blood that literally besprinkled the cabin floor.

His lips parted to speak as he was at work where Oakum sat up with bandaged head, contentedly chewing his tobacco; but a significant motion of the Cuban's hands made him turn hastily away.

This did not close Oakum's lips, though; for he said, quietly—

"Glad to see they aint polished you off, Pollo, old man."

The black did not answer, and the Cuban came round, looking curiously at his prisoners' injuries; and scanning one after the other, ended by ordering the cabin skylight to be taken off.

"I don't want to stifle you all," he said, quietly. "Now, listen and remember. We are all well armed on deck, and a careful watch will be kept; consequently any man who attempts violence will be shot down. I shall treat you all well, and you can have the run of this part of the ship for the present. Tomorrow we sail for a fresh sunken galleon, gentlemen. I am much obliged to you for clearing this one out, and I shall require your services for the next."

"For clearing this one out." The words roused an echo in Dutch's breast, as now, for the first time, he recalled his discovery of the gold, and, in spite of the pain he was in, his heart throbbed with joy. The Cuban knew nothing of the gold, which must be

worth far more, he calculated, than the silver, and this was a secret confined to his own breast.

The Cuban's plans were plain enough to them now. His object was to force them to work at the recovery of more treasure, and then, perhaps, make sure of what he had by killing them all afterwards; and Dutch made a mental vow that not a single descent would he make to further the villain's aim, but as he did so he shuddered at the thought of what a powerful engine he could bring to bear by means of Hester, who was likewise in the Cuban's power.

As this thought struck Dutch his purpose wavered, and he felt that he would be the Cuban's slave to save Hester from ill.

It was a sad night and a bitter, for as soon as darkness came down, the poor women, who had held up so well all day, broke down, and you could hear their smothered sobbing and wailing, till it went through the listeners like a knife.

"Only a bit of a cut, sir," said Sam to Mr. Meldon, who was going round and doing what he could in the dark. "I sha'n't hurt. See to Bob Lennie here. Tell you what it is, though, sir—you won't catch me at sea again in such a Noah's Ark as this here."

"Hush, my man," he said, "and try all you can to help."

"In course I will, sir," said Sam; and then, hearing a growl on his right, "That ain't Bob, sir; that's Dick. He's all right. Nobody can't hurt him, his blessed head's too thick."

Directly after the doctor felt his way to the sailor, and tied up his wounded head.

By degrees, first one and then another of the miserable party roused up with a sigh, and then sat staring about in a most hopeless way; all but Mr. Meldon, who went round to those who had been wounded, saying a cheering word or two, as well as seeing to their bandages; but it was quite by force that he had to do the captain's, for his wound had made him light-headed, and he took it into his poor cloudy brain that Mr. Meldon was Sam, and wanted to make an end of him.

The prisoners soon began whispering together and wondering what was to be done next, for they seemed to be busy on deck, and of course they were all very anxious to know; but when Sam Oakum got a tub on one of the tables, and then hauled himself up, to have a look through the skylight, he came down again, rubbing his knuckles and swearing, for one of the watch had given him a tap with a marlin-spike; and after that, of course no one tried to look out.

Every one expected that Lauré's men would have taken advantage of having their own way to have a turn at the spirits. But no; they certainly got some up, but Lauré seemed to be driving them all with a tightish hand, so that they were going on very quietly and regularly, for by and by they served out biscuit and butter and fresh water again; and not very long after, Lauré sung out down the hatchway for Sam to come up; and, knowing that if he didn't go he'd send and fetch him, Sam went up, and sat down on the deck, where he pointed to him with a pistol. Then he ordered up the two sailors, and

they were sent forward as prisoners in the fore-castle.

The greater part of the crew sided now with Lauré. Six of the men had been in his pay from the first, and it was their restlessness that made him hasten his plans to their development, for he had had hard work to keep them quiet; but now that the change in authority had taken place he ruled them with a rod of iron, and there was not a man who did not shrink from his look, and obey him like a child. The colour with which he had stained himself remained still, but it was no longer the cringing mulatto who paced the deck, but the keen, clever Cuban, ever watchful, ever on his guard, and ready to take every precaution to secure the treasure he had won; and over this, night and day, he had an armed sentry, as if suspicious of any attempt on the part of his prisoners to rob him of it by throwing any portion of it overboard.

Instead of setting sail at once, he altered his mind, and nearly a month glided by—a month of misery to the prisoners, who, however, were well cared for, and made to parade the deck for a couple of hours every evening, just as an owner might exercise the beasts he kept; and Dutch knew well enough why this was done, so that he and his companions in misfortune might be ready and strong to continue their work at their tyrant's order; but, all the same, there was one source of satisfaction to Dutch Pugh, for he saw how cumbered the Cuban was with his success, and in his greed for wealth at present there was a respite from his insolent advances towards Hester, who was allowed to stay unmolested with her friends.

Meanwhile the troublesome and painful wounds of those injured healed fast under the doctor's care; and he was called upon too to dress the cuts of three of Lauré's men, who, however, in spite of the desperate resistance, had, saving one who died two days afterwards, escaped with trifling injuries.

The question of retaking the ship had often been mooted; but unless some special opportunity occurred, this at present was out of the question; but many a plan was proposed and canvassed in the saloon during those dark, hot nights, the captain giving it out as his idea that the best thing to do would be to take to the boat some night, and get away, after laying the wires at the battery in connection with the dynamite cartridges, and blowing the ship and those within it to perdition.

Dutch shuddered as he heard the proposal, one which he scouted as being as cowardly as it was horrible; but there was one thought which made him embrace even such a terrible plan as that.

The prisoners had been aware that something was afloat on deck, but what they could not make out, and any attempt to gain information was in vain; for when they saw Pollo, who brought them their meals, which, thanks to him, were good and palatable, Lauré was always watching, and, to make matters worse, it was very evident that the black was currying favour with the Cuban, and belonged now to the opposite faction.

At last, after vainly planning and giving up each plot as futile, the prisoners sat about in the cabins or wearily gazed out of the windows one morning, wait-

ing for change. The wounds were healing fast, and gave but little trouble, and Hester, in spite of the close imprisonment, had changed rapidly for the better, joining with Bessy in ministering to those who suffered with them, and making more than one eye bright, as their owners made a vow that no harm should befall them while they had a hand to raise. Dutch had long known now how causeless had been his jealousy, and how bitterly his young wife had been persecuted; while she had borne all in silence lest, as so important a stake was in question, she might offend the Cuban, and so injure not merely her husband's prospects, but those of Mr. Parkley, to whom they were both indebted so much.

All was very quiet below, and one day had so strongly resembled another that the prisoners watched them pass in a way that grew more and more hopeless, when they were startled by the loud rattle of the heavy chain with which their door had been of late secured, and, followed by four of his partners in iniquity, Lauré presented himself, gave a sharp look round, and then in a hard, commanding tone exclaimed:—

"Every man on deck!"

No opposition was made to his orders for the moment, and the captain, Mr. Parkley, Meldon, and Wilson went up on deck, where they found Oakum, Rasp, and the sailors; but Dutch drew back as he saw Lauré's eyes turned upon Hester and her companion.

"Have him on deck," exclaimed the Cuban, with flashing eyes; and Dutch was seized and dragged to the doorway, Lauré drawing a pistol and holding it to his head until he was on deck.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

The Professional Dog Thief.

BY MONTAGU WILLIAMS.

I AM very fond of dogs—quadrupeds, of course, I mean—not jolly, but Collie dogs; and I think some years ago I could boast of the possession of one of the handsomest specimens of that breed. What a splendid fellow he was! Magnificently-marked black and tan, great big staring eyes, coat black as jet, as faithful a creature as ever came to heel. He was my particular companion, my peculiar friend—fond enough of the rest of the household, not averse to the caresses of the children, but perfectly conscious that I was the "Boss." His name was an odd one—Rob; but as I did not christen him, I'm not responsible for it. I bought him of one of the keepers at Fleurs Castle, and he was handed over to me with his name, age, and parentage written on a piece of paper, and attached to his collar.

In the winter of 187-, I was living in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor-square, and my attention was called to a number of handbills in the different windows of that district, offering large rewards for the discovery of lost and stolen Collies. The dog-stealers were having a good time of it. The forty thieves, as I afterwards learnt they styled themselves, were levying black-mail for the restoration of lost pets in all the fashionable quarters of the

metropolis. It occurred to me one day, as I looked at my friend following closely an inch or two from my heel, as though he, too, sniffed danger in the distance—"Suppose somebody took a fancy to Rob; what if one of the dawg fraternity were, with a device which even he could not withstand, to seduce my trusty vassal from his allegiance?"

The mere thought made me very uneasy, and on my return home I gave special orders to the servants to keep a sharp eye on the dog, warning them that I should hold every member of the household responsible for his safety. Our joint anticipations (mine and Rob's) were shortly realized. The next Sunday morning the dog, who always slept in my room—thinking, no doubt, that I was justly entitled to an extra hour's bed on the Sabbath, and ought not to be disturbed—had crept gently down-stairs when the servants brought up my tea, and, finding the street-door open, had strolled into the street. I awoke soon after, and whistled for my pet; there was no answer, and I discovered, to my consternation, that my friend had gone.

The whole house was in a state of confusion; the neighbourhood was scoured, but not a trace of the lost animal could be found. What was to be done? What were the best steps to take for his recovery? I held a family council, and we unanimously came to the conclusion (a perfectly wrong one, by the way) that the best thing to do was to apply to the police, and authorize them to issue handbills, offering a reward for the restoration of the absentee. I did so, and the reward offered was ten pounds. Day after day passed, fresh bills were issued, advertisements were inserted in the daily papers, the reward doubled, but with no success.

Three weeks after, I was sitting in my chambers, reading briefs, when my clerk announced that a man had called who wished to see me on urgent private business, but who refused his name. The minute he entered, it occurred to me what the private business was.

"Lost a dawg, sir, I believe?" said he. "Collie dawg—valuable dawg, sir; and I've heerd of one to-day answers the description from nose to tail. If it's all square and right, guv'nor, I know a pal of mine as might be able to work the hanimal back."

I was so anxious to recover my dog, that without much further parance I gave in, and it was finally arranged that I was to bring the money in gold to Shoreditch Church at half-past seven o'clock that night. The time for starting arrived, and I don't think I ever saw such a night—certainly not fit to turn a dog out, but I was going to try and bring one home. The wind blew a hurricane, and down pelted a mixture of snow and hail. I trotted across the Temple-square, through Serjeants' Inn into Fleet-street, hailed a hansom, jumped in, and in twenty minutes was standing on the pavement outside the railings of Shoreditch Church. Peering through the snow, I could see nobody at first, but presently a man with a peculiar gait emerged from a dark corner, and cautiously shambled up to me.

"Dawg, sir," said he, touching his hat, "come about a dawg, sir, lost in Upper Brook-street, twenty pounds reward; are you the gentleman?"

It was not a night to stand parleying, so I quickly

gave him to understand that he was right in his conjectures, that I wanted my dog, and was quite prepared to hand him over the money.

"Wait a minute, sir," he said; "business can't be done in that sort of way. You're not on the cross, sir? By yourself; no slops* about?"

I hastened to assure him he had nothing to fear from me; that I had already promised his agent in the morning, and that my word was my bond. To my astonishment and disgust, he then informed me that the dog was not in his possession, but that if I followed him to the second-class refreshment room of the Bishopsgate Station, the bargain should be concluded. I kept my temper with difficulty, I confess, and muttering something not very complimentary to my guide, he led the way, and I followed.

On arriving near the station he was joined by another man, and we all three proceeded down the platform into a dark corner outside the second-class refreshment-room.

"Now, sir," said my guide, "give us the quids, and in five minutes you shall have your dawg."

I explained to him that that arrangement would not suit me. In the first place, I had no security that my own dog would be returned; and, in the next, that I was not quite such a fool as to hand him over the money until he in return handed my dog over to me. There was a good deal of haggling; but eventually it was arranged that I should hand his friend the twenty sovereigns, that he should fetch the dog, and in the meantime I should mount guard over the stakeholder. Within a few minutes the principal returned, and Rob, catching sight of me, nearly broke away from the rope by which he was held, and once more passed into my possession.

It was bitterly cold, and wishing, for reasons I will presently explain, to see more of my companions, I invited them into the refreshment-room, and offered them something to drink. The offer, I need hardly say, was promptly accepted. My Shoreditch friend, in answer to my inquiries, described the manner by which the dog was stolen—how they had been waiting days for him, and how, eventually, he was enticed from the door, and bundled into a baker's covered barrow, which was ready in waiting round the corner. I ventured to remark that they must be doing a thriving business, and that twenty guineas was a good deal to give for the restoration of one dog, when the answer I received was that "it was only two quid apiece—there were ten on 'em in it, and it was share and share alike." I then modestly explained that, knowing who I was, I thought it rather too bad to steal my dog.

"Ah, that's the best of it," said he. "Lord, sir, you should ha' seen 'ow my pal Bill 'ere did laugh. 'Aint it rather 'ard,' says I, 'to take the counsellor's dawg?' 'Not a bit, Jim,' says he; 'he's had a good lot out of us, why shouldn't we get a leetle out of 'im?'"

The two scoundrels went off into a fit of laughter, in which I am very much afraid I joined. As I said

before, I had other reasons for prolonging this interview, and so I had. A friend and neighbour of mine, who had lately lost his collie for the fourth time, for weeks had vainly been trying to recover him. I mentioned the matter, described the animal, and was not long in discovering that the lost one was in the hands of these Philistines. I ordered some more whiskey-and-water for the party, and offered half the sum I had paid for my own dog for the recovery of my friend's. They seemed to relish this as an excellent joke; and on my venturing to remind the Shoreditch gentleman that the dog was an old one, and not half so valuable as mine, he replied—

"Quite true, sir, he is an old 'un, and not so much value in the market as the other. He wouldn't do for exportation, like yourn; but then, you see, he belongs to a lady. She's so fond of him, the children doats on him, he's a reg'lar hold family relic; sure to get him back, sir, sure."

This was rather too much; and, feeling there was no chance of success, I commenced, in rather forcible language, to give the speaker a piece of my mind.

"Not goin' to round on us, guv'nor," he replied, "not going to round; we knew we could take the counsellor's word, he aint a-goin' to break it."

I at once put him at rest on that point; that although, according to the treaty, he was safe on that night, I was not likely to forget the features and appearance of the man who had helped to deprive the counsellor of his favourite dog. The two muttered something, and hurried off. Rob and I jumped into a hansom, and in an hour's time were both asleep before the fire.

Two years passed away, and once more the forty thieves were abroad, and were levying contributions from the public more daringly than ever. Things came to such a pitch that the authorities took the matter up, and I, in my official capacity, was instructed to prosecute. The very first case that came before me was that of a man who had frequently been convicted of dog-stealing; and as the maximum punishment, after previous conviction, by statute is only eighteen months' hard labour, it appeared to me that that sentence would be scarcely an adequate one. On reading the depositions, I found that the dog when stolen had a collar on, and I determined to charge the delinquent not only with stealing the dog, but also with larceny of the collar, intending to try him first for the misdemeanour, and if convicted to proceed with the felony.

The indictments were preferred and found, and the prisoner came up to plead. Judge of my astonishment when I found myself face to face with my old Shoreditch friend. He recognized me at a glance, and the expression of the rascal's countenance was most ludicrous. He never took his eyes off me, and as I opened my case to the jury his face grew longer and longer. He did not seem to pay the slightest attention to his own counsel, and during the summing up of the judge he lolled listlessly against the dock. The jury found him guilty, and when I expressed my intention of trying him again for the theft of the collar, he seemed to give a long, low kind of whistle. He was again tried, again convicted, and sentenced to eighteen

* Policemen.

months for the misdemeanour and twelve more for the felony. Now, as it is a known fact that habitual criminals prefer five years' penal servitude to two years' hard labour, thirty months rather staggered him. He put his hand up to his head, and, looking very hard at me as he was hurried from the court, muttered to himself, "Know'd he have me some day, but he's made me pay d—d dear at last for them pieces."—*The Round Table.*

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER V.—"YOUR TURN NOW, FERINGHEE DOG."

"DO you know, Davis," said Corporal M'Andrew to the sergeant that same afternoon, "if I had a pretty young wife like yours, I shouldn't care to see that black villain, what's his name, always starin' at her and follerin' her about."

"Which black villain? What do you mean?" said Davis, quickly. "I never saw him at it."

"That's him slinking off behind the trees. He's one of the colonel's sairvants, and if I were the colonel I should send him about his business wi' a flea in his lug."

"You'd better mind your own," muttered the sergeant.

"What?"

"Said I'd punch his head for him if he doesn't mind."

"Oh! Where are you going?"

"To see where she is," said the sergeant, whose naturally florid face looked rather deeper in hue than usual as he hurried away.

"Women are a curious lot," said the corporal to himself. "Whatever made a nice-looking little thing like that take a fancy to Handsome Dick I can't think, but it couldn't have been for his appearance."

The sergeant, however, soon returned, having assured himself that his wife was in the colonel's tent with Miss Stafford, and sat down to finish his pipe, his meditations not being of a nature that promised to increase Patan's friendly feeling for him when they should next meet. His reflections might have been more inimical towards that gentleman had he known what was passing not far from him.

Mary Davis was crouching on the soft carpet spread over the sandy floor of the tent, panting and sobbing wildly, her hair dishevelled and falling about her face, while Mabel bent over her and tried to soothe her.

"There, there, Mary—don't sob so. Try and be calm, and tell me what it's all about. You will frighten me if you go on like this."

By degrees she grew quieter, and dried her eyes.

"That's better. Now, tell me what was the matter," said Mabel, taking a chair beside her and holding her hand.

"You must think me very silly, miss, to make such a fuss; but he did frighten me so."

"Who did?"

"That Indian—Patan, I think, they call him. There is more than one of that name; but this is

one of the men that put up Colonel Stafford's tent."

"Are you sure, Mary? I should never have thought that any of our servants would have misbehaved themselves."

"Quite sure, miss. I have often seen him before. Lately I have come across him everywhere, and he always stares at me with his dreadful eyes till I don't know what to do with myself."

"But, Mary, why did you not tell your husband this? He would have prevented its going any further."

"I was afraid to. He would have been so angry, and quarrelled with the black man; and I believe, if he struck him, that Patan would in a minute pull out that knife he keeps stuck in at his waist, and stab him."

"Oh, hush; nonsense; this is your fancy. Why, he dare not do it. You must not imagine such dreadful things. But you have not told me now what he did just before you came here."

"I was coming round through that little grove of trees behind the doctor's tent, when he came after me so quietly that I did not hear him till he caught hold of me, and—and kissed me, and put his hand over my mouth. I tried to call Dick, but he took hold of his knife, and I thought he would kill me if I did, so I struggled until he left go, and then ran as hard as I could until I got here. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Go and tell Sergeant Davis, and I will speak about it to papa at once."

"But I daren't go back alone," said the girl, with a frightened glance round, as though she expected to see the kelassie somewhere about, watching.

"Why, you foolish girl, there are plenty of people about. But I will go with you to find your husband if you like."

Mary rose, and smoothed back her hair, disclosing a very pretty face, with fair red and white skin, slightly tanned by the sun, and a nose which almost turned up, but not quite. However, beauty's tears are not always, as the poet tells us, lovelier than her smile, and the roseate hue imparted to the last-named feature by the fit of weeping did not certainly add to Mary's good looks.

"I do not think you need be afraid of this happening again," said Mabel, as they went out. "Papa will have the man severely punished, and he will not dare to interfere with you again."

The kelassie, Patan, had a hard day of it in the camp. He had scarcely recovered his dignity after the rough treatment Vaughan had bestowed on him before he received a good pummelling at the hands of Sergeant Davis. However, the knife remained untouched in his cummerbund this time, and he picked himself up, as Davis disappeared, and looked after him with his glistening, white teeth showing in a malevolent grin.

"It is your turn now, Feringhee dog," he muttered, "but mine will come sooner than you think."

He glided away to where another white robe gleamed among the trees, and Mary saw no more of him that day.

Captain Vaughan walked to the colonel's tent that night in a very mixed frame of mind. The happiness he would have felt as an accepted lover was

almost forgotten in the other matters that weighed on his mind. First of these was the anxiety for his sister's safety; for that she would be—nay, was now crossing the country, attended only by native servants, in the charge of Mrs. Major Harland, a lady of whom he knew nothing—he was well aware; and ever present with him was the knowledge that the list of disaffected places was daily increasing.

Then, they were to march not many hours from that time, and he was afraid the poor girl would be disappointed to find they had moved on, after remaining in the same place for some days, while it would be two or three days longer before she could overtake them.

"And when she does join us," he thought, "what is there in store for her? A cruel blow, that will crush all the hope and trust of years."

His hands clenched involuntarily, and he felt ready to curse the accident that had obliged him to resign all thoughts of vengeance on the man he now considered his enemy. The fact that Frank Morley had been the one friend to whom he confided all his thoughts and the projects that lay nearest his heart only made him the more bitter against him now.

He was in an absent mood, and during the progress of the rubber, in which the colonel and he were partners against Major Harland and Mrs. Stafford, he played almost at random, causing an impatient ejaculation to proceed more than once from the colonel.

"That was my queen, Vaughan!" he exclaimed at last, almost losing his temper. "Hang it, man, are you going to take every one of my tricks?"

"I beg your pardon, colonel; but I am rather bothered to-night, and my thoughts wander. Perhaps Miss Stafford will take my place?"

"Would you prefer it?"

"Certainly I should," he answered; and Mabel rose at the conclusion of the hand, laying down the needlework on which she had been engaged, and took his place. He drew a chair to her side, professedly to look on at the game, but his thoughts were elsewhere; and Mabel played little better than he had done, the side glance she stole now and then at his moody face making her forget on the spot the number of trumps that were out.

Cards were soon abandoned, and conversation became general. "You see, colonel," said Vaughan, "I can't help thinking about Dora. She may run into danger unawares, through ignorance of the state of the country; and then she and Mrs. Harland have only servants with them, you know. For my part, I really don't know that any of the natives are to be trusted. When an affair of this kind begins, you can't say where it will end."

"You are alarming yourself unnecessarily," said Major Harland, a big, burly man, with a voice seemingly emanating from his boots. "Your sister is in the charge of my wife, and my wife is a lady of the strongest common sense. She would only employ such servants as she had assured herself were to be trusted; and I have no doubt that she would make inquiries on the route, and direct her course so as to avoid the places where trouble has occurred."

"I wish I could feel as well assured of that as

you, major," said Vaughan; "but—well, it's no good talking, as there seems nothing to be done."

"No," said the colonel; "we have no alternative but to go on. And I do not see that we need think about that so much, for by the time they get as far as here, the dangerous part of the journey will be passed. It is in the earlier stages that the risk, if there is any, will be."

"That is true. But do not you, Major Harland, feel at all anxious on your wife's account?" asked Vaughan.

"Anxious? Not a bit. My wife is a woman who never loses her presence of mind. Besides, I have no fear that any one would meddle with her. These rebels we hear of are those who are driven to rise at last by long-standing oppression. Those they have murdered are their oppressors. They will not touch those against whom they have no grudge."

The young man shook his head sadly.

"I'm afraid you are wrong, major. In my opinion, the whole race of white men is abhorred—and feared. The fear once conquered, what have we to expect from a set of savages?"

Major Harland rose from his chair, with a laugh that matched his voice in depth.

"I shall go. I think I've heard enough croaking to last for some time. Besides, we are to be up at such an unearthly hour, and I want to have a little sleep first, if you don't."

He shook hands all round and left them, when Vaughan rose too.

"I have something to say before I follow the major's example, if you will hear me a minute, Colonel and Mrs. Stafford?"

He took Mabel's hand in his own, and spoke in a few simple words of his love for her, and his hope to make her his wife before long. The colonel showed no surprise, but his eyes glistened, and as the young man ceased speaking he held out his hand, and pressed his warmly, before throwing his arm round his daughter, who hid her blushing face in his breast.

"I can't well spare her, Vaughan: she is the only one I have. But she shall be yours some day, if it is your wish. Is it, Mabel?"

The girl pressed his hand for answer; and Vaughan turned to the colonel's wife—

"And you, Mrs. Stafford? You are willing to give her to me?"

"I suppose so," she said, with a sigh; for the young officer was not a man after her own heart, and he had just been expressing opinions of an entirely opposite nature to her own. "If Henry is satisfied, and Mabel happy, I have nothing to say but Heaven bless you, and may you be as happy as we have been."

"Thank you," he said, gratefully. "I am—"

"No more to-night," interrupted the colonel. "It is later than I thought. Good-night."

He would hardly allow him to take his first kiss from Mabel's lips, but hurried him out of the place, with a reminder as to the time he would have to be up; and Vaughan sought his tent, almost forgetting his anxiety for Dora's safety in the blissful feelings that filled his breast. He threw himself on his chapeau, though little disposed for sleep, and as he did

so he could not help thinking how but two nights ago it had been, "Good-night, old fellow," and "Good-night, Frank," from the separate beds, now moved further apart, while their occupants scarcely addressed a word to each other, if it was possible to avoid it. He resolved mentally to get this changed as soon as they encamped next day, and to share a tent with Ensign Payne, if he could, or with any one, no matter whom, sooner than have to be in constant collision with Frank Morley.

Excited by the occurrences of the day, sleep refused to visit him, and after an hour of wakefulness, the innumerable noises connected with the removal of the camp were begun, and he gave up the attempt. Going to the tent door, he looked out on the weird scene—the faint light of the moon, which had nearly set; the blazing camp fires, with their pillars of smoke curling up to the starlit sky; the figures of the Indians flitting about everywhere; while occasionally a dark moving mass, which he guessed, though he could not see the shape, to be an elephant, passed between him and the firelight. It was no new scene to him, but he had not been long enough in India to be able to sleep through the racket and bustle attendant on these occasions, and he was still wakeful and wondering how anyone could be otherwise, when his servant came with a candle, a cup of tea, and an intimation that it was a quarter to two.

CHAPTER VI.—"WHO IS JHOD RAO?"

"MY dear child, I feel ready to faint with the heat. We must stop here an hour or two, whatever comes of it."

"Very well, Mrs. Harland, it must be as you think; but I am so anxious to push forward and join my brother as soon as possible."

"Of course you are, and I am equally anxious to be with my husband; but it's of no use, I cannot bear any more jolting in this wretched gharry without a little rest."

"You heard what every one was talking about at Bagra, didn't you?"

"There, pray don't you begin, Dora. You know very well I cannot bear to hear about anything horrible. One of those men in the train—a surgeon, was he not?—began to tell me some story about sepoys rising; and I told him to be silent, for my nerves are not equal to it. If you are morbid enough to enjoy hearing dreadful things, pray hear them, but do not inflict them on me."

Dora Vaughan sighed, and hereyes, which matched in colour the cloudless tropical sky overhead, wandered over the group of native servants clustered about, as she tried to discover some evidence in their faces that they were to be relied upon.

The little party, which consisted of the two ladies, a couple of elephants, three camels, and a large number of swarthy Hindoos, had halted under some trees, and a cook was busy preparing something at a fire, while others were occupied in various ways, attending to the animals, and so forth.

"Have you not noticed," said Dora, "when we have passed Indians outside the houses in their villages, or travelling along the road, how they look at us with such scowling faces, all of them? It is dread-

ful to think so, but I feel as if they hated us. Have not you seen it?"

"No," said Mrs. Harland, languidly. "I suppose it is their natural expression. By the by, my dear, did you observe that Eastern prince, as I should judge him to be, by his appearance, whom we passed with his retinue, just as we left Bagra?"

"Yes," said the girl, a sudden rush of colour flooding her cheek at the recollection. "What of him?"

"He did stare so, I felt quite confused. These rajahs and ranas are really handsome, I think, with their dark complexions and large eyes."

Dora made no reply, and at that minute a servant appearing with some curry and plates, knives and forks, a meal was partaken of in the gharry where the two ladies had been conversing. As soon as it was concluded, the major's wife beckoned to a servant to come and fan her with a hand punkah.

"How soon shall you be ready to start again, Mrs. Harland?" asked Dora.

"Why are you in such a hurry?"

"Because I am afraid we shall not reach Moolacund to-night, and we reckoned on doing that, you know."

"Missee not go in Moolacund," said the woman, stopping in her fanning. "Sepoys all kill the white ladies there. Better go round."

Mrs. Harland turned pale, and caught hold of Dora's arm.

"How dreadful! We had better go back to Bagra."

"Oh, no, no. That would never do. If this is true, we must go on all the faster, to join the regiment, and then we shall be safe."

The elder lady burst into tears, hiding her face in her laced handkerchief, and sobbing; but her charge, without heeding her, turned again to the Hindoo woman, who was watching her attentively.

"Anna," she said, gently, "I do not think you would deceive me, would you? But I have only your word for this, and I have no means of finding out if it is true. Are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure, missee."

The woman said no more, but Dora believed her, having been previously disposed to do so from the affection she had already shown for herself; and so, taking the matter into her own hands, she gave orders to turn off towards the left, and make for the fort of Cuttabagh, which she had reason to believe, from conversation between fellow-passengers in the train, was still perfectly safe.

Mrs. Harland dried her eyes, and put on a resigned expression, as the girl returned to her gharry to speak to her.

"We are to start at once," she said, laying her hand on the plump, be-ringed fingers of the major's wife. "Don't be angry with me, dear Mrs. Harland, but I could not bear to turn back now. Think, if we lose no time, we shall be with the camp in a week. I would go through a little danger so as to be there soon."

"Very well, just as you like; only don't blame me if we are murdered, as I have no doubt we shall be."

"No, no—it will be all right, you will find. I am

sure you will soon be glad we went on," said Dora, before she left her to take her place in her own conveyance.

A few minutes later the little party moved on slowly across the open sandy country.

The fort was reached that night, and they remained under its protection for the dark hours, starting again at dawn. Moolacund, where the rising of which the black woman had warned them had taken place, was left far behind, and Dora's spirits rose. She had felt terribly frightened, in spite of the brave face she had put upon the matter, when she saw that to betray her own fears to Mrs. Harland would only add to that lady's desire to return.

However, she hoped now that all danger was past. The natives who accompanied them seemed to be all quiet and trustworthy, and the journey was continued without adventure until they reached the little town of Meejee, whose white houses glistened among groves of palms, as it lay in a little hollow, forming a pleasant relief after the long sandy plains they had crossed.

Here they halted for some hours, and might have done so longer, had it not been for Dora's energetic remonstrances.

"Why not stay here a few days, and see a little of the place?" said the major's wife.

For answer, Dora signed to her to look at a regiment of sepoys who marched past them.

"Look at their faces," she said in a whisper, "and see how scowling, sullen, and angry they all look. It may be silly and childish of me, but I cannot help feeling as though that expression resembles the dark, lowering appearance of the sky before a thunderstorm, and dreading that, if we linger, the storm will burst over our heads."

"For goodness' sake, child," said Mrs. Harland, "do speak plainly, if you speak at all, for it is much too hot for guessing riddles."

"In plain language, then," said the girl, "let us get away while we are able to do so."

As they moved out of the town, Dora looked anxiously from her gharry at every native whose glance was turned towards her party, hoping to see somewhere a look of mere curiosity. But, no! everywhere it was the same—hatred, abhorrence; and she was shrinking back, shocked and grieved, when she caught sight of a pair of eyes fixed intently upon her, and her heart seemed to stand still as she recognized the man of whom Mrs. Harland had spoken soon after they left Bagra, and whose offensive stare had obtruded itself on her notice in that town.

There could be no doubt of it: he had followed them all the way!

As soon as they were well out of Meejee, and the mosques and minarets began to diminish in size, Dora leaned out, and looked back. There was nothing to be seen but the little town they had left; and she gave a sigh of relief, for she had half expected to see the gorgeous trappings of the elephant on which the dark-skinned grandee had been mounted glittering in the sun.

On and on, over desert-like country, varied here and there by patches of jungle, the sun beating down fiercely and more fiercely, until at last they stopped

to rest again as a shady spot offered itself, while a meal was prepared.

There would be no more towns in their way now till they reached their destination, and Dora grudged every minute that they remained in one place, longing impatiently for the moment when the sight of the white tents of the encampment in the palm tope should greet her eyes. Thinking of this, she forgot her fears of pursuit, until she was roused by the voice of one of the men, a Mohammedan—

"Will the mem sahibs like to go on? Jhod Rao coming."

He pointed to where a cloud of dust and moving forms were faintly visible on the distant horizon.

Dora Vaughan's heart beat fast, but she controlled herself to speak firmly.

"Who is Jhod Rao? And why is he following us?"

"He think Miss Dora look well in the zenana."

The girl shuddered, and turned pale as ashes. Her courage failed her, and she turned appealingly to Mrs. Harland—

"Oh, Mrs. Harland, do you hear?" she said, her voice trembling. "What shall we do if he overtakes us?"

"Silly child," said that lady, calmly; "how easily you are frightened. I am not surprised. In fact, I expected something of the kind, after the way in which he stared at me at Bagra. But I will speak to him, if he does catch us up, and I have no fear for the consequences. These rajahs and people of that kind have always so much respect for an English lady."

Dora's presence of mind returned as she saw how little sympathy was to be gained in that direction, and with a few words to the bearers to hurry forward as quickly as possible, she was soon being conveyed along at a quicker pace than had yet been attempted.

As the irregular motion of the gharry began again, she sank back with a sob.

"Oh, Frank, Frank," she said, softly, the next minute. "If you were but here to protect me, I should fear nothing."

When at last, after a long march, they had halted again for the night, nothing was in sight, and daylight brought the same good news. The Mohammedan who had told her of Jhod Rao's pursuit now answered her inquiries as to how much further they had to go with the welcome reply that they could reach the camp by dusk.

She communicated this intelligence to the major's wife, with eyes sparkling with pleasure, for she had great faith in this man, who acted as guide, being well acquainted with the country; but Mrs. Harland received the information without any expression of delight or the contrary.

"Ah, my dear," she said, with a pitying smile, "when you have been married a few years, you will take the prospect of meeting Captain Morley after an absence from him with more calmness. We grow wiser as the years pass on."

Dora flushed deeply, and made no further remark on the subject. Breakfast was partaken of, and their preparations began for continuing the journey.

"Dora, love," said Mrs. Harland, suddenly, "look back. Is that not what's his name in the distance?"

"Oh, surely not! It is!" cried the girl, agitatedly. "But it is not far to go now. Oh, pray let us be quick."

Through the next hour their pursuers seemed to get no nearer, a fact which puzzled Dora, who thought it would have been easy to overtake them, their fastest pace seeming painfully slow to her impatient heart.

They halted again for a very short time for their midday meal, and once more her heart leapt as she found that their pursuers were not visible. As they were about to go on there was a good deal of talking and confusion among the Hindoos, and then Mrs. Harland's maid, Anna, approached her gharry.

"One of the elephants is lame, Missee Dora."

"Lame! Why, how comes it to be lame, Anna? What has happened to it?"

The woman lowered her voice to a whisper.

"Think Chu, one of the coolies, did it, miss."

"Whatever did he do it for?"

"Jhod Baboo Rao pay him at Meejee, he promised to do it, so we have to stop till he catch up."

"What shall we do, Mrs. Harland?" said Dora, despairingly.

The major's wife burst into tears.

"I wish my husband were here," was all she said, and once more the young English girl felt herself completely thrown upon her own resources. She thought a few minutes, and then decided upon the course of action to pursue.

"Let Chu and two or three more take charge of the elephant, and bring it along as fast as they can. We will go on without it."

Chu evidently objected to this plan, but Dora was firm, and they were soon on their way again; but the short delay had given Rao time to gain on them, and his elephants and camels were plainly visible now.

On again, through the blinding rays of the god of day, for long, weary hours; but at last, as the sun was beginning to sink, the Mohammedan approached her conveyance.

"Missee sees that tope of palms in the distance. It is there the camp is."

Dora looked out and saw it; then, glancing in the opposite direction, she became aware that their pursuers were gaining on them fast, but she almost laughed as she thought what a warm reception they would meet with.

"They have no idea how near help is," she said to herself, and her heart beat fast as they drew nearer the tope, nearer and nearer—were in it, to see—what?

A litter of different kinds of rubbish, an empty bottle or two, the ashes of dead fires—and nothing more.

A TOULOUSE journal gives details of an exciting chase on the mountain of Cagire. Three hunters in search of sport came suddenly on a large she-bear. One of them, sheltered by a bush, fired on the animal and wounded it in the shoulder. The bear retreated a short distance, and then, rearing on its hind feet, rushed at another of the hunters, who discharged the contents of his gun into its breast. The animal retired to a thicket, from which it was dislodged next day by a big dog, and despatched.

Death of Major Whyte-Melville.

IT can hardly be denied—and least of all by contributors to the sporting press—that in every country inhabited by men and women speaking the English tongue a great loss has been sustained. On Thursday, the 5th inst., Major Whyte-Melville went out hunting with the Vale of White Horse hounds, and during the afternoon of that fatal day his horse, while galloping across a ploughed field in the neighbourhood of Malmesbury, fell heavily, pitching his rider over his head, and dislocating his neck. The unfortunate gentleman never spoke again, and breathed his last in ten minutes. So stunning was the shock to the field of horsemen—among whom the gallant major was universally known as the cheeriest and most gladsome of comrades—that the hounds were at once stopped, and the day's sport brought to a close; and the "meet" announced is also cancelled. Such tragic incidents are calculated to lend additional force and intensity to the thoughts suggested by the French proverb—"La joie fait peur."

There has never been wanting in England and elsewhere a school of what are called moralists—whom, for our part, we should prefer to designate as old women, of either sex—with a keen eye to turning such catastrophes into pegs upon which to hang homilies. But, of all men that ever lived and died, Major Whyte-Melville, in whose breast there was not room for a single unmanly thought, would have been the last to wish that fox-hunting should suffer because he himself had happened to die from a fall in the hunting field. It was one of the fundamental articles of his belief that our manly sports, pastimes, and open-air pursuits have powerfully contributed to make Englishmen what they are. Every line that he ever wrote is instinct with the spirit which animated Charles Kingsley, and which had previously been expressed by the lamented Dr. Arnold when he wrote—"There is no earthly thing more mean and despicable, in my opinion, than an English gentleman destitute of all sense of his responsibilities and opportunities, and only revelling in the luxuries of our high civilization, while doing nothing, even in his amusements, of a manly or stirring character, but contenting himself with the notion that he is a great and valuable person."

Major Whyte-Melville might have been described, in the phrase applied by Dandie Dinmont to one of his own pepper-and-mustard terriers, as "weel entered" for the duties of a sporting writer. Men who have not yet passed middle life can recall more than one ball or merry-making in the "Land o' Cakes" at which the father of the lamented major figured as the most conspicuous rival to the late Duke of Hamilton in dancing those fantastic and diversified forms of the Highland reel, which are so incomprehensible to the staid eyes of a Southron. The elder Major Whyte-Melville—or, as our French neighbours would phrase it, "Whyte-Melville père"—has also enjoyed, for more than half a century, the reputation of being one of the best and most ardent golf players that the famous Links of St. Andrews have ever known.

With such blood in his veins, the author of "Mar-

ket Harborough," of "The Adventures of Digby Grand," and of "Katerfelto: a Story of Exmoor," was made of the right stuff to ride well across country, and verbally to photograph the impressions produced upon an observant mind by a drama so replete with life, movement, and action as a rattling burst across the big pasture fields of Northamptonshire or Leicestershire.

It is an accepted axiom with sporting writers of authority that no better description of a run can be found in the English language than that given by the famous "Nimrod" in his *Quarterly Review* article. Mr. Lockhart, the then editor of the *Quarterly*, plumes himself, in one of his private letters, upon having exhumed "a scholar and a gentleman of unexceptionable quality, who can not only ride to hounds like Musters or Meynell, but describe what has taken place with the mingled fire and ease of Walter Scott." It is our impression that, had Mr. Lockhart been spared to read "Market Harborough," or "The Brooks of Bridlemere," or "Katerfelto," so just and discriminating a critic would, as a sporting writer, have placed Major Whyte-Melville first and Mr. Apperley (or "Nimrod") second.

The scene, as painted by Major Whyte-Melville's cunning hand, passes before the reader's eyes without jerk or interruption, and entitles its delineator to the commendation bestowed by Lord Beaconsfield upon Charles Dickens's novels, that "they flow on like a river." There is, moreover, a realistic accuracy in Major Whyte-Melville's pen which was occasionally wanting to the touch of "Nimrod," and visibly absent from the over-coloured pages of "Harry Lorrequer" and "Charles O'Malley." It is at once patent that the writer has taken a living and active part in what he is describing, and that in speaking of a hog-backed stile, or of the fringe of willows that proclaims to many a beating heart that there is "a brook in the bottom"—or, again, in picturing the difficulty of riding a run on a pulling horse with one stirrup broken—the author is but recording his experiences of scenes "quarum pars magna fuit."

It has been suggested by more than one of Major Whyte-Melville's intimate friends that, possessing his happy knack of writing, he would have struck a rich and congenial vein of ore had it been his good fortune to serve during two or three stirring campaigns with such irregular cavalry as the bodies of horsemen, hirsute as the gorilla and bronzed as Oriental emirs, which are known to their fellow-subjects under the name of "Fane's and Probyn's Horse." One such experience Major Whyte-Melville enjoyed when, in 1855, he joined for awhile the Turkish contingent of cavalry as a volunteer; but this experience was too brief for him to turn it to much advantage.

Having joined the Coldstream Guards in 1839, he retired from the army in 1849, and betook himself at once to the congenial task of writing novels; and it may fairly be doubted whether his first books were not his best. At any rate, it is certain that "Digby Grand" and "Market Harborough" were incomparably superior to "Riding Recollections" and to "Roy's Wife;" nor ought it to be forgotten that novels so full of dash and spirit, and with so

little of still life and analytical power in them as the books which came trooping from the pen of Whyte-Melville, have an inevitable tendency to repeat themselves. Thus, it is evident that "Roy's Wife" is but a pale reflex of "All Down Hill;" and, moreover, in the Miss Merlins or equestrian *lionnes* of Major Whyte-Melville, there is the same family likeness which exists between Mr. Charles Lever's dashing military heroes, or between the "Meg Merrilies" and the "Norna of the Fitful Head," for whom we have to thank the ingenious and creative brain of the inimitable Sir Walter.

But, with all the deductions that the most vigilant criticism may fairly subtract from his books—with all the faults that may not unreasonably be imputed to his style of writing—the conclusion remains, that in Major Whyte-Melville the sporting world has lost its happiest and most spontaneous author. To few among the novels which in these days are poured forth by a too copious and fecund press, is it given to attain more than an ephemeral existence; and there is perhaps nothing in "The Gladiators"—which is Major Whyte-Melville's most ambitious work—to enable it to float down the stream of time without sinking to the bottom. But when we turn from his prose writings to the lays of the hunting field with which so many of us are familiar, it is at once apparent that "The Clipper that Stands in the Stall at the Top" and "The Galloping Squire," will live as long around the dinner tables of foxhunters as Campbell of Saddell's—

"We have seen a run together, we have ridden side by side—

It binds us to each other, as a lover to his bride."

In like manner "The Druid" tells us that, in the country hunted by the Raby hounds, there is still many a Durham farmer to troll forth the well-known verse—

"Lately passing o'er Barnsdale, I happened to spy

A fox stealing on, with the hounds in full cry;

'Tis Darlington, sure, for his voice I well know,

Crying 'Forward, hark forward!' for Skilbrook below.

With my Ballymanoora, the hounds of old Raby
for me."

In the sporting county of Cheshire, and especially in the district sacred to the far-reaching memories of the Tarporley Hunt, who is there that ever rode into a hunting field but is aware that Egerton Warburton wrote songs, of which the following verse is a fair sample—

"If your horse be well-bred and in blooming condition,

Both up to the country and up to your weight,

Oh, then give the reins to your youthful ambition,

Sit down in the saddle, and keep his head straight."

Not dissimilarly, we are persuaded that the best of Whyte-Melville's hunting songs are destined to attain what, according to Dr. Johnson's definition, may be called "immortality." "I call that immortality, to so sublunary a creature as man," said the sage, "to which it is permitted to endure for one hundred years." Not less than that period of time will pass away before, either within these islands, or in that "Greater Britain" beyond the seas, foxhunters will cease to be stirred to their

lowest depths by the very mention of Whyte-Melville's name, as they sing or recite "A Rum One to Follow, a Bad One to Beat;" or again, as they read the most perfect portrait of a hunter ever painted by English lyricist—

"A head like a snake and a skin like a mouse;
An eye like a woman's, bright, gentle, and brown;
With loins and a back that could carry a house,
And quarters to lift him smack over a town.

Where the country is deepest, I give you my word,
'Tis a pride and a pleasure to put him along;
O'er fallow and pasture he sweeps like a bird,
And there's nothing too wide, nor too high, nor too strong.

Last Monday we ran for an hour in the Vale:
Not a bullfinch was trimm'd; of a gap not a sign;
All the ditches were double, each fence had a rail,
And the farmers had lock'd every gate in the line.

I'd a lead of them all when we came to the brook—
A big one, a bumper, and up to your chin;
As he threw it behind him, I turn'd for a look;
There were eight of us had it, and seven got in."

Field.

Sad Dogs.

EVIL times have lighted on Parisian dogs since the panic about hydrophobia was raised two months ago. The Prefect of Police has forbidden them to walk at large without muzzles, some varieties of the tribe have been condemned by him to wear chains, and others, such as bulldogs and bloodhounds, he has prohibited to walk in the streets at all. The consequence of this ruthless edict, a copy of which is posted at every street corner low enough for dogs to read by standing on their hind legs, but sufficiently high to be out of reach of possible manifestations of their contempt, has been to hand over all the dogs to the untender mercies of vagabond boys who prowl about in search of offenders against the muzzle law. The worst of it is that the Parisian street boy and the dog had until lately been firm allies, so that it took the persecuted quadruped some time to discover how his whilom friend's heart had hardened against him. Hence displays of misplaced confidence on the one hand and of treachery on the other, which are distressing to witness, much as one may have grown accustomed to observing them among bipeds.

A sum of fivepence paid for every dog which a Gavroche conducts to the Fourrière is the cause of the revulsion that has taken place in youthful feeling; but by his cupidity the Gavroche has lost a cheerful playmate, and he has succeeded at length in making dogs wary. Such masterless curs as have hitherto escaped capture, shamle about cautiously, with their ears down and their eyes wide open, looking out for pursuers. If tempted with bones they stow their tails between their legs and trot on; and if whistled to they take to their heels.

Unfortunately there is the novice dog, who has not yet learned to generalize his mistrust of human nature from particular instances of black-heartedness which have come under his notice; and there is again the dog who wears a muzzle, but is robbed of it, and

then taken into custody by the thief, who gets him executed for having disobeyed the law. Can one imagine a baser case than this? The dog who has strayed for a moment from his master's heels, or who has roamed out alone for a breath of fresh air, is decoyed up an alley, and while he is blessing the unknown friend who is removing the horrible leather straps from his nose (thinking that he and this youth are presently going to have a good romp together), lo! he feels the noose of a rope round his neck, and is dragged off to prison like a malefactor. I would not augur well of the boy who thus betrayed a dog's confidence for fivepence; and I could imagine that in some juvenile breasts there must come a pang of remorse at the thought of the innocent dog arraigned before his judges and being unable to defend himself.

To nineteen dogs out of twenty the Fourrière is but the antechamber to death. The handsomer ones are, indeed, offered for sale, but since the outcry against madness, purchasers have been few; and well-bred poodles, spaniels, terriers—nay, even large and wise Newfoundlanders, have been sacrificed along with their uglier brethren. There has never been such a holocaust since Paris began to call itself, rather prematurely, a civilized city. It is said that 16,000 dogs have been slain within two months, and this wholesale murdering of man's best, most lovable companions, will probably go on, for gloves are always ready to buy the skins. So even after death our poor four-footed friend does his best for us. He keeps our hands warm.

A distinguished lady novelist not long ago put forth a plea for dogs; and it is much to be desired that her kindly appeal, which I believe has saved the life of many an English dog, should be promulgated in France for the protection of French ones. Sharing with the gifted authoress her love for the canine race—believing that dogs are good educators of children, to whom they teach mercifulness, and knowing them by experience, as boy and man, to be the truest companions in sport or affliction—I do humbly protest against the foolish craze which is strapping their jaws together in hot weather. For that matter, I should protest against it equally in winter time, for I believe that a muzzle has never served any purpose whatever beyond that of spoiling a dog's temper.

In the first place, it is never the mad dogs who get muzzled. The dog who feels madness coming on takes himself off to new haunts before a muzzle can be put on him, or he bites when the muzzle is taken off. No one has yet suggested that dogs should be kept permanently muzzled day and night, and be fed through a straw; and yet, if muzzles are to be any real protection to the public, it would be necessary that they should be cautiously worn, in which case the dogs would get some compensation for their misery by having their lives much shortened. As a fact, hydrophobia is extremely rare, and it very seldom afflicts those who are most often accused of it—the houseless curs who roam at large, feeding on offal. In Eastern cities, where dogs form a majority of the living population, a mad dog is never seen; were it otherwise, there would soon have been thousands upon thousands of mad dogs spreading

the rabies by biting each other, and men would have been obliged to arise and destroy the whole race.

In France, as in England, the dogs most liable to go mad are those who lead unhealthy lives; and among these, ladies' pets, when overfed and deprived of exercise, are chief. The dog requires open air and a good deal of liberty; give him these, treat him kindly—which means don't throw stones at him, tie kettles to his tail, or halloo at him for being mad when he is only frisky—and he will jog through life doing his duty sanely enough, like the best of us.

Kennelled dogs, again, are apt to go mad when their kennels are placed in a position where they get too much sun, or too much cold and wet. A dog may be maddened by sunstroke or by rheumatism, arising from damp; so kennels ought always to stand in dry, sheltered places, while the chains should be long enough to allow the dog to step out into the sun, and take as much sun-warmth as he wishes. If left to himself, he will never take more than is good for him; but it should be added that constant kennelling is no more good for a dog than it would be for a man.

Once a day, at least, the chain should be slipped, and the dog should be turned out for a full hour to stretch his legs, and enjoy himself. The prospect of this hour's liberty recurring daily at fixed times, when possible, will give the dog patience to support his captivity, and will not render him a bit less vigilant at night in barking at strangers. Oh, that men would remember that dogs have minds to think with, and that when treated foolishly or brutally their brooding reflections tend to moroseness! What must a Parisian dog, for instance, think now, as he trots about hot, thirsty, and half stifed by his muzzle?

A little reflection will show the officials who have prescribed this engine of slow torture that it cannot possibly be a good thing. Can we imagine any of the great and noble dogs of history or legendry wearing muzzles? How would the dog of Montargis have comported himself if he had been sent against his master's enemy with jaws grown weak from long strapping? How would Ouida's honest dog of Flanders have disported himself if he had followed his young master with a contrivance of leather and wire upon his nose? How would the bold Douglas's hound Lufra have contrived to pull down that stag in the sports at Stirling, and by so doing have led (indirectly, indeed) to her master's restoration to Royal favour, if she had walked about with her fine mouth bandaged up like a faggot?

But one might multiply such queries indefinitely. Enough to say that under the present law of muzzles a man who fell into the water in sight of his Newfoundland dog would have to sink or swim by himself. All his faithful dog would do would be to frisk about, whining on the bank, after making intelligent but ineffectual attempts to pull off his muzzle with his forepaws. Or, if a malicious dog, he might sit placidly on the said bank and wink with his eye—but who ever saw a dog's malice go to the length of vindictive indifference to human life or suffering? So I do hope the Prefect of Police will never drop into the Seine before the eyes of his dog, attired in the regulation straps. The good brute would suffer too much at being unable to pull him out.

The Hudson Bay Fur Traders.

THE boatman himself, or voyageur if an Indian, is generally a young man, heavy set, copper-coloured, and highly ornamented. His black hair is greased, and plaited in small braids, from which depend bright-coloured ribbons or feathers. About his thick neck there is a broad band of wampum, from which he hangs, suspended over the throat, a huge silver medal. This medal was not presented for valuable services rendered, however, but can be purchased at the company's stores. His capote is open at the throat, and reveals a broad, uncovered chest, corded with muscle. In lieu of the sash he wears a broad leather belt, in which is slung his fire bag, beaded or quilled, containing a pipe and tobacco, flint and steel, and serving also, upon occasion, as a pocket-book.

If the voyageur be half-breed, he is a little above the medium height, with lithe, active frame, enough of the aborigine to impart suppleness, and sufficient of the white to add a certain solidity of frame lacking in the savage. His features are regular to a fault; complexion nut-brown; black eyes, and long hair hanging down in a straight mass over his shoulders. He wears a tasseled cap, and is also *en capote*, but of fine blue cloth, ornamented with two rows of silver-gilt buttons; variegated sash, corduroy trousers, and moccasins, of course. He is quick and nervous in manner, and volatile in temperament to a degree.

The craft in which these men labour are called "inland boats." They are built of the usual pattern of whale boats, and have a carrying capacity of about three and a-half tons. They possess one sail, which is square and large. Each boat is worked by nine men, of whom eight are rowers and the other the steersman. Brigades composed of from four to eight of these craft are kept plying in various directions throughout the season of open water on the inland lakes and rivers. Their cargoes, destined for the interior, are composed of goods intended for the Indian trade at the various posts scattered over the territory. Their return freight is made up of furs and other country products for shipment to England. These brigades generally traverse the same routes for consecutive years, occupying from two and a-half to four months in making the voyage. The boating season generally commences early in June, and continues until the middle of October, when the ice begins to form on the northern waters. At the extreme limits of the course traversed by the boats going north and west inland, they are met by other boats travelling south, bringing the furs already traded. At this point of meeting an exchange of cargoes is effected, when each brigade retraces its course. In this way the whole country, from the forty-ninth parallel of latitude to 67 degrees 30 minutes, is supplied with goods and drained of furs.

On the rivers traversed by these brigades there are many interruptions to navigation of so serious a nature that the boats have to be unloaded, and, together with their freight, carried by their crews occasionally for a considerable distance overland, to be re-launched at the nearest spot where the ob-

struction is at an end, or to be placed in the waters of another stream running in an opposite direction. This process is called "making a portage."

The vast amount of handling necessary in passing goods over the numerous portages which intervene between the *dépôt* posts, and even the nearest inland districts, renders the packing of the merchandise a matter of great importance. The standard weight of each package used in the Hudson's Bay Company's service is one hundred pounds. Such a bale or case is called an "inland piece." Each of the above described boats is supposed to be capable of containing seventy-five pieces as a fair cargo. The facility with which such pieces can be handled by the muscular tripmen is very perfect; a boat can be loaded by its crew of nine men in five minutes, and the compact, orderly appearance presented on completion of the operation is beyond praise.

The arrangement of the duties of the various grades of men belonging to these brigades is well calculated to suit its purpose. The steersman attached to each boat is the captain. Seated on an elevated flooring in the stern of the boat, he steers with the common helm, or, if the situation is critical, with a long and powerful sweep, with one stroke of which an expert workman will effect an entire change in the course of his boat. It is an important duty of the steersmen, also, to lift the pieces from their places in the boat, and lay them on the backs of the tripmen at the portages. The process of raising seventy or seventy-five pieces, each weighing one hundred pounds, from a position beneath the feet to a level with the shoulders, is one requiring a man of considerable strength to perform efficiently and with expedition.

Of the eight men composing the crew, one is called the bowsman. The special duty of this person is to stand at the bow of the vessel at all portions of the route abounding with rapids, shoals, or sunken rocks, and while advising the steersman by voice and sign where such obstructions exist, himself, with the aid of a long light pole, to aid the motion of the boat into a safer channel. When not occupied with this distinctive duty, the bowsman does duty at an oar like any other man of the crew.

The "middlemen" are the rowers. When a favourable breeze blows, their duties are relieved by the substitution of the sail.

At portages they transport the boat and goods overland. Each man is competent to carry two pieces on his back at a time. They are maintained in position by a leather contrivance, termed a "portage strap," by which the weight of the burden is brought to bear upon the forehead of the porter.

Over each brigade there is placed a guide. This functionary may be termed the commodore of the fleet. His special duty is to show the route in all parts where it is doubtful, or lead the way where rapid or other obstructions intervene. He supports the authority of the steersman, and transacts the business of the brigade at posts where it touches on the route. He is an important official, and, when properly qualified, exceedingly useful. He is generally advanced in life, having necessarily risen from the position of middleman to that which he now occupies. His knowledge of every rapid and shoal

throughout the long course of his run is generally perfect—so much so that, even on a dark night, with a favouring breeze, they will press forward through treacherous waters when economy of time becomes an object.

Of the brigades making the long trips, occupying the four summer months, the pay of a guide is £35, of a steersman £30, bowsmen £18, and middlemen £16. When efficiently performed, the work done, though of a healthy nature, is extremely severe.

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Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXXV.—HOW FRIENDS WERE FALSE.



"HO is master now?" exclaimed Lauré, brutally; and with tottering gait, John Studwick passed him; but there was a look in his eyes as he gazed at the Cuban that made him start uneasily, and then, with a contemptuous laugh, he turned it off, and followed him on deck.

Dutch heaved a sigh of relief as he saw that Lauré stayed with them, and had

them ranged along by the starboard bulwarks, and then addressed them.

"We sail from here directly," he said; "and as I don't want to be hard on men who have got to work for me, I am going to make you an offer, on which condition you can have your liberty on deck. I shall make the same offer to you all, though I suppose there will be some fools among you who will not take it. What I propose is, that such of you as like to swear you will make no attempt to escape or fight against me can go about, except at night, when you will be all locked up again; but you have to bear this in mind, that any one who runs from his promise will be shot like a dog, or pitched over to the sharks. Now, then, captain, will you help to navigate the ship?"

"No, sir," was the reply.

"Well, Mr. Parkley, my disappointed speculator, what do you say?"

"I have nothing to say to such a scoundrel," replied Mr. Parkley.

"You will stop on deck, doctor?"

"I shall stay with my friends, sir."

"So shall I," said Mr. Wilson, stoutly.

"As you like. I needn't ask you, I suppose, my clever diver; but you had better stay, and get strong," said Lauré, with a sneering laugh. "You will have plenty to do by and by."

Dutch made no reply, but looked defiance.

"Just as you like," said the Cuban, grimly.

"Now, you two sailors, stop and help work the ship, and you shall have four times the pay that these fools were going to give you. I'll give you a heap of ingots apiece."

Lennie and Rolls were evidently tempted, but they looked at Sam Oakum, who was cutting off a piece of tobacco in the most nonchalant way.

"Well, why don't you speak?" cried Lauré, sharply.

"Cause we're a-going to do same as him," growled Rolls, nodding at Oakum.

"And what are you going to do, Sam Oakum?" cried Lauré, who was getting wroth at his plan for reducing his prisoners being foiled. "Come, my man, I'll make it well worth your while to turn over on my side. The game's up with those you have served, and if you hold out you will be forced to work with a pistol at your head; but if you come over to me, and help me well to navigate the ship, and get the treasure from a couple more galleons, I'll make you a rich man for life."

This was a painful moment for Dutch and his friends, for, instead of indignantly refusing, the old sailor, whom they thought so staunch, hesitated, and turned, and whispered to Rasp, who was by his side.

"Come, look sharp; I've no time for fooling," cried Lauré. "What do you say?"

Oakum looked at his fellow-prisoners, then at Rasp and the two sailors, and gave his quid a fresh turn before speaking.

"S'pose I says, 'No; I'll stick trumps to my old skipper,'" he growled.

"Well, then," said Lauré, showing his teeth, "you will have to work twice as hard. You'll have three days given you to carry the schooner to the next sunken wreck, and if you don't do it in that time I shall send a bullet through your head."

"Thanky," said Oakum. "Well, now, suppose as I says I'll fight for you, sail the schooner, and help get up some more treasure, what'll you give me?"

"Oakum!" exclaimed Dutch, who had believed strongly in the old man's faith.

"You be blowed," growled Oakum. "I must take care o' myself. Now, then, gov'nor, what do you say?"

"I'll give you a hundred of those silver ingots down below. That will make you a rich man."

"Won't do," said Sam, stoutly. "I aint going to cut my old skipper for no hundred on 'em. Make it two hundred and I'll take you."

"Oakum, if you have a spark of manly feeling in you!" cried Dutch.

"Aint got a spark, Mister Dutch Pugh. It was put out that day of the fight."

"You scoundrel!" cried the captain.

"Same to you, captain," said Oakum, coolly. "Now, then, gov'nor, what do you say? Is it to be two hundred, or is the proposal off?"

"I'll give you the two hundred," said Lauré, with flashing eyes, for he knew that Oakum would be invaluable to him, and very likely bring Rolls and Lennie over, the three being the best sailors in the ship.

"And 'bout grog," said Oakum.

"As much as you like when the work's done," said Lauré.

"And 'bacco?"

"Of course."

"And I aint to be a common sailor?"

"No, under me you shall have command of the ship, as far as navigation goes."

"Then I'm on," said Sam Oakum, giving his leg a slap, after a glance at the armed men on one side and his captive superiors on the other.

There was a murmur of dissatisfaction from the captain and the others at this secession, and Oakum turned upon them sharply.

"What are you a-growing about?" he exclaimed, throwing off his former tones of respect. "You can't spect a man to stick to you always. Your game's up—his is on. I'm going on his side. Why not? I'm a pore man, and I shall be a pore one if I don't make some tin this trip."

"You're quite right, my lad," said Lauré, slapping him on the shoulder, and then turning a malignant look on his prisoners.

"One must know which way his bread's buttered," growled Sam. "Say, my lads," he continued to Rolls and Lennie, "you cangodown and beboxed up under hatches if you like, only if I was you I should say to the new skipper, 'Give's twenty of them bars a-piece, and we'll stick to you to the end.'"

"I'll give you twenty ingots a-piece, my lads," said Lauré. "Will you come over?"

"I'm a-going to do just the same as Master Oakum does," said Lennie.

"I'm on too," growled the other, with what sounded a good deal like a curse.

"That's good. Step over here, then," said the Cuban. "You are free men."

There was another angry murmur from the prisoners, as they saw with dismay their party lessened by three.

But there was a greater trial in store for them, for just then Oakum turned sharp round on old Rasp, who was taking snuff viciously, as he leaned back and looked on.

"I say, old Beeswax," said Oakum, "now's your time to make your bargain. You're a fool if you stop there."

"For heaven's sake, Rasp, don't listen to him!" cried Mr. Parkley.

"What have you got to do with it?" snarled Rasp, angrily. "He says right. Your game's up, and if we're a-going diving again, I may just as well be paid for it as work for nowt."

"Come, then," said the Cuban, whose face flushed.

Rasp took a couple of steps forward, and the Cuban met him.

"What'll you make it if I come and dive for you,

and get all the rest of the treasure? You can't work it proper without me, so I tell you."

"I'll give you the same as Oakum," said the Cuban, eagerly.

"Same as him!" snarled Rasp, "and him a common sailor? How are you going to get your treasure? I won't dive."

"With this," said Lauré, tapping his revolver.

"Not out o' me, you can't," said the old fellow, giving a poke at an imaginary fire. "If I says as I won't dive, pistols couldn't make me—there."

"We shall see about that," said Lauré, sharply.

"There, I don't want to fight," said Rasp, to Mr. Parkley's great astonishment, for he had looked upon the old diver as truthfulness itself. "Here's the plunder, and there's no call to quarrel over it. I tell you what—say ten per cent. on all we get, and I'm your man."

"Ten per cent.!" exclaimed Lauré.

"Well, you'll save by it," said the old fellow. "Sha'n't I work the harder, and get all the more?"

"There's my hand upon it," said the Cuban; and they shook hands, while Mr. Parkley uttered a loud groan, and Dutch's eyes glittered with rage.

"That will do," said the Cuban, who could ill conceal his triumph. "Now, then, down below with you, captain, and you, my clever adventurers. You have played with me, you see, and your cards are all trumped. Now, take my advice, and wait patiently till you are wanted; for if you try any tricks against me, the stakes may mean your lives."

All had gone below except Dutch and Mr. Parkley, who turned round and addressed their renegade followers.

"As for you, Rasp," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, "if any one had sworn to me you could be such a scoundrel, I would have called him a liar."

"You keep a civil tongue in your head," snarled Rasp. "I worked faithfully for you, and you made your money. Now it's my turn. You'll have to work, and dive too—d'yer hear?—and I'm going to make the money."

The Cuban looked on curiously as these exchanges took place, and his face flushed with pleasure as he saw Dutch turn upon Oakum, who was leaning against the bulwarks, making believe to look on, cool as could be, and screwing his old mahogany phizog into what he meant to be a grin of delight at his freedom.

Dutch saw him grinning, and sent such a look at him as made his face grow as long as a spoon; but he laughed it off, and, pulling out his box and opening his knife, he went up to him and said in a free-and-easy way, "Have a chaw, mate?" and made believe to cut him one.

"You cowardly old traitor!" said Dutch; and unable to contain himself, he caught the old sailor by the throat, and shook him violently.

This treatment seemed to rouse the old fellow into a state of ungovernable passion, for, giving way in the surprise of the moment, he was driven back against the cover of the cabin hatch; but recovering himself directly, with a savage oath, he raised his knife and struck Dutch Pugh a fearful blow full in the chest, and the young man staggered back along the deck.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—OAKUM'S MESSENGER.

SAM OAKUM followed Dutch, as he staggered back, his knife entangled in the loose jacket he wore, and, dragging it furiously out, he was going to strike again, when a couple of the sailors seized his arm.

Frowning and swearing, Sam allowed himself to be held back, while, panting and white with rage, Dutch exclaimed—

"Coward, as well as traitor, you will get your reward!"

"Here, let go, will you?" said Sam, furiously, making a desperate effort to get free; but the men held on, and Lauré interposed—

"Let him go, Oakum, let him go," he said, smiling with satisfaction. "You can serve him out by and by, as you call it, some day when he is diving," he added, with a peculiar look.

Oakum gave a savage growl, like that of a bear, and glared at Dutch, who was now half forced below, hurt in mind, but very slightly in body, for Oakum's clumsy stab had gone between his ribs and arm, merely tearing his jacket.

Lauré gave his orders, then Oakum took the command, and, the men readily obeying, the anchors were hove up, and, after their long stay, the schooner sails once more shaken out, and the vessel began to glide gently along through the limpid waters of the beautiful bay.

During the next two days the Cuban kept a suspicious watch over Sam; but as he went direct at his work with a good deal of ardour, and knocked Pollo down for coming up smiling at him, he rose greatly in Lauré's favour; and on the third morning when the Cuban came on deck and saw Sam busily scanning with his glass the shore along which they had coasted, he came and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"You know the next place, then?" he said.

"Well, I dunno whether it's the same as yours," said Sam, with a grin. "Mine lies just under that bit of an island off yon point."

"Where the rocks lie piled up like an old castle, and there's a little cove only about big enough to take this ship?" said the Cuban.

"That's him, cap'n," said Oakum, showing his yellow teeth. "Say, I think it ought to be another hundred bars, cap'n, for this."

"Wait and see, my man. If it turns out as well as the last, I may behave handsomely to you; at any rate, if you serve me well, I shall not be shabby—handsome—shabby, that is what you say, is it not?"

"I say handsome," said Oakum, quietly; "never mind the shabby."

That afternoon the schooner was comfortably moored over where the sunken vessel lay, and this time there was no difficulty in finding the place, for about six fathoms below the surface the black timbers could be seen, and the Cuban rubbed his hands with glee, telling Oakum that this would be the richest find, as it was here he had himself dived and obtained the ingots.

"And was the tother one of the places you knowed of?" said Sam.

"Yes," replied the Cuban; "and I know of far more yet."

"Didn't you dive down at t'other place?"

"No," said the Cuban, lighting a cigar. "I sent down a black, who was a splendid swimmer—one of my slaves."

"Suppose he goes and clears off the silver unbeknownst to you?" said Sam, grinning.

"He will not do that," said the Cuban, quietly, exhaling a cloud of smoke.

"How do you know, cap'n?" said Oakum. "I never trusts niggers," and, as he spoke, he scowled at Pollo, who was crossing the deck, and who slunk away.

"Because he is gone where I should send any man who was likely to prove treacherous to me," said Lauré, in a low, hissing whisper. "That fellow began to talk too much, and one night he fell overboard—somehow. It is impossible to say how."

The two men stood gazing in each other's eyes for a few moments, and then the Cuban added, slowly—

"I never boast, and I never forgive. A man is a fool to his own interests who tries to escape me. Your worthy employers thought that they had quite got rid of me, and had the field open to themselves. You see where they are? Now, if such a man as that old Rasp were to play fast and loose with me, that old man would die. Don't tell him I said so—it would make him uncomfortable; and it is better a man should not know that he is likely to die. Take a cigar, my good friend, Oakum."

"Thanky—no, cap'n—I always chews," said Sam; and then, as the other moved and went forward, Sam added, "He's a devil, that's what he is—a devil."

Old Rasp was sitting on a coil of rope close at hand, polishing up one of the helmets ready for the morrow's use, and just then the two men's eyes met, and a peculiar wink was exchanged, but they did not speak; and the rest of the evening was spent in making preparations for the morrow's descents.

Since he had been on deck, Sam Oakum had once or twice seen a little canary, one that Mr. Wilson used to pet a good deal, feeding it and training it so that it would sit on his finger, and feed from his hand; and this bird set him thinking.

Quite half the birds were dead; but there were several surviving, thanks to Pollo, who had given the little things seed and water, and cleaned out their cages. He had begun to talk to Oakum about them, but the old sailor turned upon him savagely—

"You go and attend to your pots and pans," he said, "you black lubber;" and Pollo shrunk from him with a frightened, injured air; and as the black crept away, Oakum suspected that the Cuban was close at hand, as he always was whenever either of the seceded party spoke together.

"Poor old Pollo!" said Sam to himself, as he sat down opposite the cage, and began thinking. "Now, I wonder, little matey," he said, softly, "whether, if I let you loose, you'd find your master, and take him a message."

He sat thinking for a while, and then shook his head.

"No, I'm sartain it wouldn't do; no, not even if you could talk like a poll parrot."

He strolled on deck, and saw that there was a sentry by the broken skylight, and another by the cabin hatch, and this was always the case; for the Cuban kept up the strictest discipline, one so perfect that if anything like it had been the rule under Captain Studwick, the vessel could not have been taken.

Sam watched his opportunity, too, when the prisoners came on deck; but he soon found that any attempt to obtain a word with either, even if they had not avoided his glance, would have been fatal to the enterprise which he had in hand.

"I shall have to take to the bird," he said, at last; and at daybreak the next morning he opened its cage door, and the little thing fitted out upon deck, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy its liberty, flying into the rigging, chirping, and ending by descending the cabin hatch, attracted thereto by a peculiar whistle; but after a time it came up again, suffered itself to be caught and replaced in its cage.

"That'll do," said Sam to himself; and he went about his work, while that morning the whole of the diving apparatus was rigged up, and Rasp carefully inspected the ground.

"It's all right," he said to the Cuban. "Now, then, have him up. Here, let's send old Parkley down."

Mr. Parkley was summoned on deck, and his first idea was to refuse to descend.

"You'd better go down," said Rasp, grinning. "If you don't go with the soot on, it's my belief that you'll have to go down without."

There was no help for it, and he put on the diving-dress, and went down, Dutch being summoned on deck directly after, to find Lauré and his men all armed; and he felt that resistance was vain, and he, too, went down, and then with Mr. Parkley worked to clear away the sand and weeds that had collected in the hold of the vessel.

A few ingots were found and sent up directly; but it was evident to both, as they compared notes, that the work of many days must follow before they could get at the bulk of the treasure that lay below.

And so another day passed, Dutch still finding, to his delight, as he went below, that the desire for the treasure was still the prominent feeling in Lauré's mind.

The next morning, at daybreak, Mr. Wilson was first astir, and Dutch had just joined him to sit by the cabin window, and enjoy the fresh morning breeze, which was deliciously cool, when a bright, sharp chirp was heard, and the canary flew down through the broken skylight, and alighted on the table.

"Dick, Dick!" cried Mr. Wilson, with the tears of joy in his eyes—"pretty Dick." And the little thing flew on to his finger, turning its head first on one side and then on the other, as it looked up in his face with its bright beady eye.

"What's that under its wing?" said Dutch, sharply.

"Paper," was the reply; and, sure enough, tightly tied beneath the little pinion was a tiny piece of

doubled-up paper, which, on being opened out, bore these words in pencil—

"Keep a steady hand at the wheel, and wait. Friends on board. Work and wait."

"Can that mean treachery?" said Dutch, doubtfully; and, going to their berths, he read the words softly to the captain and Mr. Parkley, and asked their opinions, as well as that of the doctor.

"No," said the latter. "That's no treachery, but from a friend."

"I see it all," whispered Dutch, with his face flushed with joy.

"What do you mean?" said the captain.

"I knew old Oakum and Rasp could not be such scoundrels. Their behaviour was all a blind. They are our friends."

"That must be it," acquiesced the others; and it was decided not to send any message back, but to let the bird go.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—SAM OAKUM'S NARRATIVE.

ABOUT this time Sam Oakum took to noting down what took place on board, not with pen and ink, but mentally—all of which notes he afterwards had transferred to paper; and as his observations have a considerable bearing on this story, they are here introduced:—

Times went very sluggish just then, and having nothing particular to do I went below, and the first place I came to was the cabin that had been fitted up for Mr. Wilson's birds; and on getting to 'em, there they were, poor little things, fluttering and chirping about with their feathers all rough, for they'd got no water and seed. Quite a score of 'em were lying dead in the bottom amongst the sand; and after giving the pretty little things water, and seed, and paste, I fished out the dead ones in a quiet, methodical sort of way, turning over something in my mind that I couldn't get to fit, when I feels a hand on my shoulder.

"Going to wring their necks?" says Lauré, for it was him come down to watch me.

"Not I," I says. "They'll do first-rate to turn out on the island we stops at. Sing like fun."

"Look here, Oakum," he says; "we're playing a dangerous game, and you've joined us in it. Don't play any tricks, or—" He didn't say any more, but looked hard at me.

"Tricks!" I grumbled out; "I'm not for playing anything. I'm for real earnest, and no favour to nobody."

"I only said don't," said he, and he went up again.

"A suspicious hound!" I says to myself; and then I began to turn over in my own mind what I had been thinking of before; and then having, as I thought, hit upon a bright idea, I hugged it up, and began to rub it a little more shiny.

You see, what I wanted to do was to get a word with Mr. Pugh, and how to do it was the question. I knew well enough that I should be watched pretty closely, and any attempt at speaking would be put an end to most likely with a bullet.

I rubbed that thought about no end, and next morning I goes to the cage again, and instead of feeding it I quietly took out the panting little thing,

carried it on deck, got up in a corner under the bulwarks, and waited my time, watching the while to see if any one had an eye on me. Then I let the bird go; and it flitted here and flitted there with a tiny bit of paper fastened under its wing, till, as I had hoped, there came from out of the cabin skylight a particular sort of chirrup, when the bird settled on the glass for a moment, and then dropped through the opening where it had been broken, just as he did before.

Now, on that bit of paper I had printed this time what I knew wouldn't hurt me if the bird was seen by the mutineers, for I was afraid to say much this time; and as I had written on it, "Let him go again," so, sure enough, up he came ten minutes after, and, watching my chance, I followed him about till I caught him, and took him back to his cage, and gave him plenty of seed.

The Cuban had taken possession of the cabin next to where his prisoners were, and the skylight being partly over his place, a word with Mr. Pugh was out of the question; while such a little messenger as I had found would go to his master when called, perhaps without calling, specially after him being fortunate enough to catch sight of the bird the first time I tried.

All that day matters went on as usual, a strict watch being kept over the prisoners, and more than one, as I fancied, having an eye on me.

Now, not being a scholar, I had a deal of trouble over the note I got ready for the next morning, for, you see, I wanted to say very much in a very little room, and in a way that shouldn't betray me if it was to fall into the wrong hands. It was meant for Mr. Pugh, but I knew Wilson would get it; but that didn't matter, as they were fellow-prisoners, and what I wanted was to put the skipper on his guard, and also to let him know that all I'd done was so as to be alongside of them all. So I says in the note—

"HONOURED SIR—Keep a bright look-out ahead, and haul every sheet taut. Them as you thought was sharks a-showing their teeth warn't only shams. Take all you gets, and clap 'em under hatches, and, whatever you do, don't be deceived by false colours, nor hail ships as seems enemies."

"There," I says to myself, when I'd got that printed out careful, "if he can't make that out, he can't understand nothing;" for I put it to you, what could I have said clearer, and yet made so as no one else could understand? It seemed to me that I'd just hit the mark, and the next thing was to get it to him.

Who'd ever have thought, I says, that that long doubling-up chap, as we all made such fun of with his little birds, would have turned in so useful; and then I got what you big people call moralising about everybody having their use on earth, without it was mutineers, whose only use seemed to me to be finding work for the hangman.

I got no chance to send my note that day, through people being about; next day, too, nothing came of it; but early the next morning, soon after daybreak, I got my little messenger out, tied the paper to his wing with a bit of worsted out of my kit, and then,

going on deck, I let him fly; but so as not to take the attention of the chap at the wheel, I started him from up in the main-top, where I made-believe to have gone to have a smoke.

There was a watch of three forward, but they were all half asleep; while as for him taking his trick at the wheel, he kept on nodding over his job, and letting the ship yaw about till she went anyhow.

Bless the pretty little thing! When I first opened my hand, it only sat there looking at me with its bright, beady eyes; and then it was so tame, it hopped upon my shoulder, to stay a few seconds, before flitting from rope to sheet and shroud, lower and lower, till it perched upon the cabin skylight, and rattled out a few clear, crisp notes, like a challenge to its master, who, I felt sure, would be asleep. My only hope was that the little thing would flit through the big hole I made, and stay in the cabin till Wilson was up.

But I was wrong, for the bird had no sooner sung its sweet note, putting one in mind of old boyish days when we used to go bird-nesting, then I saw a hand thrust up through the broken light, and after a little fluttering, the bird let itself be caught, when, knowing that my job was done, I came slowly down, and walking aft, stood and talked to the chap at the wheel.

"Hallo!" I says, all at once, "there's one o' my birds got loose;" and, running forward, and making a good deal of fuss, I captured the little canary, for it never flew far at a time, having been tamed and petted by Mr. Wilson till it was almost like a little Christian.

That day I watched my chance, and got hold of what powder I could, making a little packet of it in my silk neckercher; and when it was dark, I managed to drop that through the skylight as I went whistling along the deck. Next thing to be done was to get some weepuns, for it seemed strange to me if we six true men couldn't somehow make our chance and turn the tables on the rascals who had taken the ship. Then I thought the odds would be fair, for fighting with right on our side, I considered that we were quite as strong as eight of the others.

But the job was to get hold of weepuns, for they never let me have neither cutlash nor pistol. Some of the chaps grumbled, saying that, now Lauré had made hisself captain, times were as hard as they were before. But that wasn't the case; though now he'd got the ship, he didn't mean to lose her again if he could help it, and seemed to me to be always on the watch for everything. As to trusting either of we three to go down below to the prisoners with rations, that was out of the question, either he or his mate attending to that; and more than once I heard high words, and Mr. Pugh talking in a threatening way when the big scoundrel was below.

Day after day slipped by, and all I had managed to drop more into the cabin was only a couple of table knives; when one dark evening, as I lay under the bulwark, hid by a bit of sail, I saw Lauré come out of his cabin, go and talk to the chap at the wheel, see to the course of the ship, and then go forward. I heard him talk to the watch for a minute,

and then he went below forward, when, running upon all-fours, I was at the cabin hatch and down below in a jiffy.

As I expected, there were plenty of pistols and cutlasses there, where he had had them put for safety; and if I could have opened the big cabin door, I might have pitched half a score in before any one could have said "Jack Robinson." But there was something to stop me, for I had crossed the cabin and had my hand on a cutlash before I knew that Lauré's mate was in the cabin, with his head down upon the table, and seemingly fast asleep.

I should think I stood there with my hand stretched out for a full minute, not daring to move, expecting every moment that the Cuban would come back, or else that the mate would wake up.

That minute seemed to be stretched out into quite an hour; and then, feeling that it was now or never, I shoved one after the other six pistols inside my shirt, when taking another step to reach where some cutlasses stood together in a corner, I knocked one down, when I threw myself on my hands and knees, so that, if the mate started up, he would not see me at first. Then as I stooped there trembling with anxiety, I heard him yawn, push the lamp a little farther on the table, and a minute after, he was snoring loud.

I waited as long as I dared, and then, rising lightly, I got hold of one cutlash, and then of five more, out of a good twenty as stood there; stuffed as many cartridges out of the arm-chest into my pockets as they would hold; and then, after doing all this by fits and starts, expecting every moment that he would hear me, I turned to go.

I'd crept across the cabin, and reached the door, when I heard a step on the deck, and drew back; but the next moment it had gone; and after waiting for a minute, with the cutlasses tightly held under my arm, I made another start, when my heart seemed to sink, for I heard a sort of husky cough I well knew, and the Cuban had his foot upon the stairs.

There was only one way for safety, and that I snatched at; for in another few seconds he would have had me by the throat, and all would have been over; but, darting back, I laid hold of the lamp, dashed it down upon the sleeping man's head, and then leaped aside.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—SECRET SERVICE.

THAT trap took just as I expected. Mr. Sleepy leaped up like a wounded tiger; and, cutlash in hand, the Cuban bounded down the stairs, when the two men were locked in a sharp tussle in an instant, leaving the way clear for me to slip up, gain the mizen shrouds, and make my way up into the top, where I laid my treasures; went hand over hand by the stay, and got down to the deck again in the dark by the main shrouds, without being seen, and joined the party that was being collected by the noise and shouting in the cabin.

"Curse you! bring a lantern. Help here, or he'll kill me!" roared Lauré, in a smothered voice; but not a man dared go down till I offered; and, making believe to be afraid to venture without a cutlash, one of the chaps handed me one; and with the lan-

tern in my other hand, I went cautiously down, chuckling to myself to find that Lauré and his man had been mauling one another awfully; and if it had not been for my coming, there'd no doubt have been an end of one of the scoundrels; for, woke up wild and savage from a drunken sleep, the mate had attacked Lauré fiercely, and when I got to them, had him down and half throttled.

There wasn't a man that didn't grin as Lauré cursed and raged at the mate for a drunken fool, starting up and knocking the lamp over; while t'other swore that Lauré struck him first, showing his bleeding head as a witness; but after such an up-and-down fight as they had had in the dark, no one took much notice of what he said, every one, themselves included, taking it for a false alarm; and we all separated, leaving them two sore and savage as could be.

Knowing how frightened some of the prisoners would be, I says out loud to one of the chaps as we passed the broken panes—

"Don't s'pose the captain thought there was so much muscle in old Sleepy."

"Hold your tongue," says the other; "he'll hear you."

And then we both laughed and walked forward, me wishing the while that those below could have known of my luck, but satisfied that they would feel that there was nothing particular the matter.

Feeling pretty sure that Lauré would not be on deck again that night, I waited about three hours all in a tremble, as I lay in my hammock, for fear I should go to sleep, and forget to fetch the weapons; and even then, spite of all my pains, lying there and trying to keep awake, if I did not drop off, and dream that they were missed from the cabin, and that Lauré was going to shoot Mr. Pugh for stealing them. Then I awoke with a start, and it seemed to me that I had been asleep for hours and hours; and I slipped out of my hammock, to find, from the men talking on deck, that I couldn't have been more than five minutes. So I crept down again, and into my hammock; and once more I dropped off, do all I could to stop it; and this time I dreamed that the wind had changed, and all hands had been piped to shorten sail, when they came across the arms in the top. Then I awoke again with a start, to find that I would hear the buzzing of voices still upon the deck. But I wouldn't risk it any more, though I feel sure I shouldn't have slept above half an hour at a stretch; and, sitting down by my hammock-head, I took a bit of baccy, and sat listening, till it seemed as if it would never grow late enough to go. At last, I felt that if I meant to act, it must be at once, or there would perhaps be a change in the watch, and I might lose my chance; so I crept up on deck, taking with me a handful of lashing; and as soon as I felt the breeze, I knew that I was not a minute too soon; for with a good mate or captain, orders would have been given directly to shorten sail.

The watch were well forward, and, as usual, the one at the wheel was half asleep, or, being now much lighter, he must have seen me going up or coming down from the mizen-top where I had left the arms; but no; I got them safe down; and then, crawling

like a cat along the deck, I threaded the lanyard I had through the trigger-guards of the pistols, and lowered them one at a time, all six, and was just drawing the lanyard back after loosing one end, when I felt a warm hand from below grasp mine, and on drawing it away I was able to pass the cartridge and six cutlasses down one after the other, to have them taken from my hand.

I'd hardly done before I heard a step on the deck behind me, and, dropping flat down, I gave a half roll over, so that I lay close under the combing, but not daring to move; for it was the watch coming to the man at the wheel.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

Aladdin's Wonderful Cave.

WE read in the "Arabian Nights" of a cave where forty thieves were discovered by a fortunate youth, who, from his hiding-place in the top of a palm tree, heard them pronounce two cabalistic words, and saw the famed robbers quickly disappear in the depths of a rock-bound hill. The passport he found both useful and convenient to remember, and when on their return and departure the way was made safe for his descent, he experimented with it "by way of a little diversion," as Micky Free hath it; and to his amazement, at the "Open Sesame" the rocks moved apart and invited entrance into a cave so entrancing and wonderful that he stood spell-bound at the sight. But not long, for being of a frugal mind, the jewels and bars of gold, amassed at such an expense of time and labour by these obliging Forty Directors and Stockholders (their old surname being too ugly a word for ears polite in these days, besides being long obsolete), were of far more interest to his youthful but calculating character. With an acuteness worthy of the nineteenth century, he appointed himself Receiver, and placed the valuables where they did most good—to himself.

Such is the story in that most beguiling and wonderful book ever written, and yet fact discounts fiction, as it often does in life, and Ali Baba's cave, springing from the vivid, impassioned fancy of the Eastern romancers, cannot equal the reality in the chambered galleries and the vaulted halls of this newly-discovered cave in Luray.

From a thorough examination of the place I have just come. I visited it in a coolly critical humour, which nothing but a succession of marvels might satisfy. I returned bewildered, dazzled by the most wonderful and beautiful work ever fashioned by the cunning fingers of Nature.

When I reached the vicinity of the cave a large crowd was clustering about the entrance, for the cave is not in the mountains, as one might suppose, only set in a moderate-sized hill, not over seventy-five feet high. To the foot of this hill the people would come and then disappear as mysteriously as did the children following the Piper of Hamelin, who sank out of sight in the depths of the ground, never to return. The cave was discovered by accident last August by a Mr. Stebbins, who knew by the indications that there must exist a cave near at

hand; and finding a small hole in a bunch of briar bushes, proceeded to investigate the orifice; widened it; then, feeling the cold air rushing through, lowered a companion down by a rope, so discovering the greatest curiosity in America, if not in the world. Its existence was never dreamed of. It is true that many a time sportsmen, in starting old hares and flushing partridges, would see them fly to a bunch of briars on a barren hill, and on going up could never flush them. Many a puzzled head has been rubbed to get the perplexity out of it, wondering where the things had gone. The descent is about sixty feet, and you enter a large, arched room, rugged and rough, that seems to have been formed by volcanic action. From this there open several vaulted passages that extend into others, which lead away and away into chambers and seemingly interminable labyrinths, each one varying with a distinctive and bewildering beauty of its own. Every day the prospect widens to explorers, who, breaking the stalactites and crawling through crevices, enter upon new realms of marvel. These stalactites hang from the roof in endless variety; some like the folds of a heavy curtain, with cords and tassels complete; others drop like furled flags over the military bier; while the roof is studded with pendant icicles, some light green, blue, purple, or else gleaming like silver in the lamplight, and flashing out like diamonds.

Further on you come to a grand chamber that surpasses anything mortal hands could shape or mind conceive. It is an immense apartment, oval in shape, with a lofty roof fretted by millions of designs in frost work and sculptured tracery, all in the most weird, fantastic carvings. In the very centre of this place, that resembles the interior of a grand cathedral, there arises a massive pillar of white rock that is a marvel of perfection and beauty. It looks like bas-relief, and is worthy of hours' study. From all portions of this chamber there rise shadowy, indistinct, half-carved forms and figures of the purest white, such as one would see in an artist's studio were he to half work out his conceptions, and then in a caprice throw his chisel away, leaving them all designed, yet all unfinished. Words cannot describe the solemnity of the place—it must be felt. The immensely lofty ceiling, the fantastic gleaming statues, the stately alabaster pillars, the trailing vines, the drooping drapery all in spotless, pure adamant, the unfathomable vastness, the deep stillness that fills the soul with a shuddering awe, no language can do them justice. One could easily imagine himself in a vast cathedral for purer beings than our coarser clay of earth, and half expect to hear unearthly music float away through the chancelled aisles and pillared domes. A lady tourist with us sang, in her pure soprano, the "Evening Hymn to the Virgin," and the effect was unutterably grand. The voice rang out clear and sweet, filling to the vaulted roof the air with rich melody, while the intermingling corridors sobbed and wailed back the refrain in a sad echo, that died away in tremulous murmurs, faintly and more faintly, in the far off-distance. Then the deep, heavy, sacred silence, for centuries old, crept back once more, and held its royal sway. Yes, one could swear he beheld the stoled monk flitting along the vestibule, and disappearing behind

the shadowy pillars—silent, noiselessly absorbed, telling his beads, and thinking not of earth.

Clear, limpid springs are found in many chambers—in one a series of springs, each varying in size, and distinct from the rest. The loveliest thing of all is one which is hollowed out in the floor of the cathedral, and lies there limpid, cool, and pure. Around it is a framework of stone, whiter than Parian marble, and embossed with the most exquisite carvings in Nature's softest touch. Delicate leaves in fragile designs, as softly pure and delicately beautiful as frost work, yet as durable as tempered steel. No human hand, however gifted, might catch in a lifetime the secret of this marble carving; it is above everything earthly and beyond. And the spring itself—well, Hebe handing up a cup of nectar from the immortal spring; Venus drinking her libation to the sovereignty of Pluto; Titania, queen of fairies, attended by her training, spring from earth, sea and air; Ponce de Leon, dreaming of the Fountain of Youth—never beheld aught lovelier than this. Even as the fabled water, hid in the grotto under the sea, that Ariosto saw in his vision when the mermaids combed their golden locks, and the three old blind crones passed a single eye around that each might glance once at its magical beauty, so one stands by the lovely creation and feels that Mother Earth keeps hidden in her depths greater wonders than ever mortals wot of.

We kept on descending steadily downward, new beauties opening to the enraptured eye. In one cavern there looms up a grand pulpit of white stone; in another the walls were so smooth and polished that we saw our faces in them as in a mirror; again, in a large round room, there spread out beneath it naught but the clear, still waters of a lake—was ever lofty room so carpeted before?—while around in interminable distances were immense masses of blocks, columns, walls, pillars, set with diamond springs, flashing and reflecting the light in dreams of beauty too numerous for the telling. Can it be our pure lost Eden laid away in its silent crypt? Drops of water, filled with mineral properties, filtering through the ground for ages, solidifying and crystallizing, formed through centuries, under the mighty hand of the Maker, these wonders and marvels of beauty. Footprints of wild animals, long since vanished, have sunken deep in the clay with heavy tread, and the impression yet so soft that it can be easily obliterated, tells of the great passing of time. Hour by hour, day by day, year after year, centuries upon centuries, before even primeval man was born, in age succeeding age, has this slow, amazing work progressed.

In its deep, silent slumber it lay, reminding one of the vision John saw in Patmos of the city whose twelve gates were twelve pearls, and whose waters were as clear as crystal. Generations came and went, heedlessly passing over the fair realms beneath their feet. To us, as if the stone had been rolled away by angel hands, it bursts upon the startled gaze as a revelation. To our eyes it is sent in its calm, still glory. We receive it reverently, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

In the bridal chamber, a large, roomy apartment nearly oval in form, is the "Cascade." Imagine a

torrent of water falling from the height of some twenty feet, and then, as if struck by the wand of the enchanter Merlin, that every drop of water, each bubble of foam, the very spray itself, and the falling fluid were changed into pure marble and solid adamant, and you can picture to yourself this exquisite production of nature. The illusion is so perfect that the eye does not recognize the change, and only the actual visible touch shows the wonderful metamorphosis.

Perhaps the greatest curiosity is the skeleton of a man, which lies as it fell at the bottom of the deepest gulch in the cavern. The hair is gone, but the skull, jaw and lower limbs remain, and both of the thigh bones are fractured. Who he was, of what race and what period he came, none will ever know. Imagination shudders at his awful fate. Lost in this vast labyrinth—alone, surrounded by Cimmerian darkness, groping his way foot by foot, inch by inch; shouting, perchance, and hearing nothing but mocking echoes returning his despairing cries; hearing, in his distempered fancy, strange, fearful noises, and seeing gleaming spectral lights, and then losing his balance, he fell to the bottom of a chasm and lay there with shattered bones and tortured sinews, dying by inches in lingering agony all alone, with no sound save the ceaseless drip of the water drops on the granite floor beneath. Surely the devilish cruelty of the holy inquisition never conceived a death more full of horrors than this.

There is a tradition told by the old inhabitants of this section, of a man who disappeared from his home near here some forty years ago, and was never found. His gun was discovered on the hill-side, but he and his dog were never seen again. To my mind these bones are the remains of a race long extinct, and have been lying here for hundreds and hundreds of years. As for the ancient inhabitant who disappeared half a century or so ago—well, he may have gone up the mountain like old Rip Van Winkle and his dog Wolf; and he may, for aught we know, be asleep on some mountain top to-day, and will yet reappear in the streets of Luray with his beard a yard long, all spotless white, and inquire for his Gretchen, who has turned to dust this many a long day ago.

The great mystery to me is where the pure air comes from that sweeps through the cave. The temperature is not over 60 deg., and never varies perceptibly. I believe that this whole region will be found to be one vast cavern, connected together by passages. Every day the explorers discover new rooms, which lead into others; and since the first explorations scores of other openings have been found that branch into apartments that have remained for infinite time untouched by the footsteps of men, or the black darkness rising like a pall, unlighted by the gleam of a lamp.

There are dozens of springs, pools, and miniature lakes all throughout these caverns, from the depth of several inches to many feet. The waters are clear and opaline in tint, with a slight limestone taste, and cool as though drawn from a deep well.

I have drawn but a brief description of these caverns. I could say much more, but no pen can convey the wonderful, weird, fantastic loveliness of

the place. Only a thorough personal examination can do that. I recommend a visit to this cave for all lovers of the beautiful, and to all tourists who love the strange and marvellous in nature.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER VII.—"IT'S THE GIRL HERSELF."

"**P**ON my word, Morley, one place is so much like another out here, I feel as if I had been asleep and dreamed all those long hours of marching. Here we are, to all appearance still pitched in the same tope of palm trees, the scenery is so very like that we have left."

"Only that one wouldn't feel so beastly tired after a dream, I should agree with you," said Morley, lazily, without taking the trouble to conceal a yawn, as he lay on his charpoy trying to get a little sleep to make up for the short repose of the preceding night.

"We shall soon be in action now, according to what they say," continued Ensign Payne, who was sitting by his side, smoking a cheroot.

"You might let a fellow have forty winks in peace, Payne."

"Very well, go on. You need not take any notice of me: every one seems to be going asleep. I left Vaughan because he went bang off in the middle of a capital story I was telling him, and now you're as bad."

"Go and do li—— Hallo, just see what he wants, will you?" said Morley, as a servant appeared at the tent door.

The ensign obeyed, returning to his seat the next minute.

"The colonel wants you at once."

"Bother! I wonder what's that for," said Morley, in an ill-used tone, as he rose. "Don't know; do you?"

Payne shook his head as he followed the other out; and then, as Morley strode off to Colonel Stafford's tent, he sauntered to where a group of men were standing, engaged in excited conversation.

"Is anything the matter, MacAndrew?" he asked.

"The matter, sir? That scowling deevil Satan, or Patan, or whatever they ca' him, has disappeared."

"Is that all? A good thing too, I should say."

"No, sir, it isn't a'. He hasjta'en Mary Davis, the sairgeant's wife, awa' with him, and Davis is a'most daft."

"Pooh, nonsense, MacAndrew. She's somewhere about, you may depend."

"She hasn't been seen since we encamped, sir," said one of the men; "and two or three more of the natives are gone too—p'raps half a dozen. Davis has been to ask the colonel to let a party go out to look for her."

The reason of Morley being summoned struck the ensign at once, and he resolved on the instant to get permission, if possible, to be of the number. He met Frank Morley returning, all his fatigue

forgotten, and the decided, military manner of the officer in its place.

"I see you have heard about Davis, Payne. I am to head a small detachment, and I asked for you to come with me. I thought you would like it."

"Thanks, old fellow. I was on my way for that very thing. I'll get ready at once."

He hurried away to the tent where Vaughan was still sleeping, an exchange having been made, so that he shared that of the ensign, as he preferred to brave the remarks and chaff of his brother officers to being compelled to accept Morley's company.

Payne's entrance and bustling movements as he armed himself roused him, and he started up.

"Hallo, where are you off to?"

In a few words the ensign related what had taken place.

"I wonder why the colonel chose him in preference to me," he said at the conclusion. "I am older, and have seen more service."

"Perhaps that is the reason, and the colonel thought any one would do for this. Well, ta-ta for the present."

Before they started Morley beckoned the sergeant aside.

"What do you think, Davis, as to the direction to take? Speak out, man, and give me your opinion."

"I should go straight back the way we came, sir," said the sergeant, who, instead of seeming agitated, looked grim and stern, with an expression in his eyes that boded ill for Patan. "You see we don't know where they separated from us, and they may even never have left the place where the tents were last pitched."

"Ah," said Morley, thoughtfully, "that seems probable, as, if there had been anything going on since daylight, it would have been noticed at once."

The little party was soon marching steadily back along the rough, uneven road over which they had passed in the early morning. The dust was frightful, and the sun beat down on their heads with an intensity almost unbearable.

Past topes of palms, with their long bare stems and tufts of leaves spread out, high up, looking cool and green, but throwing no shade to speak of, tramped the men, grumbling at the heat, in tones that reached Morley's ears, as he walked side by side with the ensign, in the rear.

"Poor fellows," he said, "I don't wonder at them. I am half-choked with this fine white dust myself, and my eyes and ears are full of it. In fact, I think we get the worst of it by far. The men in the front are the best off as to dust."

"Yes, I don't see why we should have to be smothered by all that they kick up," grumbled Payne, in an injured tone.

They were approaching a Hindoo village, outside the houses of which a number of dark-skinned natives were standing grouped together, and talking in low tones, while they stared in no friendly manner at the little detachment as it neared them.

"Halt!" cried Morley; and as the men came to a standstill he approached a little knot of villagers, and made inquiries of them in the hope of gaining information with regard to those they sought.

The answers he received were short, sullen, and

unsatisfactory, but he was pretty well convinced from their manner that they knew nothing, and returning to his place, he gave the word to march once more. "I say," said the young ensign, "did you notice those fellows' faces?"

Morley nodded.

"I never saw such black looks as they bestowed on us. Why, I can't think; but I believe they hate us like poison."

"Very probably," said Morley. "By Jove, there's one of the men down. What's the matter there?"

He pressed through the men to find one poor fellow lying insensible on the ground.

Payne pulled a flask from his pocket.

"Here, give him some brandy; that will set him on his legs again. What is the matter with him, Morley?"

"Sunstroke, evidently," said the other, as he forced a little of the life-giving liquid between the lips of the prostrate man.

His efforts to recall consciousness, however, were fruitless; and he stood up again to remain for a minute looking reflectively at the ground.

"It's unfortunate, very," he said, directly; "and I see only one thing to be done. Some of you must go back with him. Let's see, perhaps I had better send eight, so that you can relieve each other."

"But, I say, Frank," said Payne, in a startled tone, "think how that will weaken our party."

"I have thought of that, but there is no help for it. I don't believe four would be able to carry him all the way in this sun. Besides, what have we to do? To rescue a woman, and bring back half a dozen native servants, who will probably be cowed and submissive at the very sight of us. Pooh, I am sure we can spare them easily."

Without any more hesitation, he singled out the men for the purpose, and they were soon on the march again, their party lessened by nine.

They halted once for a little rest by some water, no signs that Mary Davis and her captors had been near encouraging them in their search. They kept up an anxious look-out for a dropped scarf or handkerchief to tell them that she had been taken that way, but so far in vain.

Between two and three in the afternoon, when the sun was still blazing his hottest, to the delight of all, the palm tope, that had been the halting-place for the last few days, was visible in the distance. They must surely find something there to indicate the direction the fugitives had taken, and the lagging footsteps of the weary men became brisker at the sight.

The scouts, who had been on in advance, were suddenly distinguished returning towards them; and Morley, as they approached, felt his heart beat with excitement.

They brought the information that some Hindoo of importance was evidently resting in the palm tope, attended by a large retinue, there being several elephants and a camel or two; and even from the distance at which they then were, Morley and Payne could discern the glitter of the trappings and ornamentation of a howdah.

"They may know nothing, Harry," said Morley; "the probabilities are that they don't, and they may

be hostile, which is a bother, as we don't want to waste our strength. However, we will go on and see."

As they neared the tope, they could make out that there was a large party of some description grouped in the shade. All at once a female figure darted out into the sunlight, stood for an instant looking on all sides, and then ran swiftly towards them, pursued at first by several white-robed natives, who stopped almost directly, as they apparently caught sight of Morley's men advancing, and retreated again to the tope.

"It's the girl herself!" exclaimed Payne, the next minute. Sergeant Davis had already become aware of this fact, and, forgetting discipline, he quitted the ranks, and ran forward to catch his wife as she fell senseless into his arms.

He bore her to the rear, calling to the bheesty to bring him some water, while Morley gave the word to halt.

Mary soon came to, and as soon as her senses returned, started up in agitation.

"Quick!" she cried. "Oh, men, be quick, or the wretches will escape. Miss Dora Vaughan is there. Save her from the wretches."

"Why, Morley," exclaimed the young ensign, "what's the matter with you? Come on—we can rescue her, if it is true."

The young man, who had turned deadly pale, recovered himself immediately.

"Forward," he cried, quickly; and a few minutes longer brought them to where, in the grove of tall palms, in which were still the signs of the late encampment there, Dora and Mrs. Harland were being dragged away by a number of the servants of Jhod Rao, who was mounting hurriedly to his howdah with the intention of following.

It was but the work of a few minutes. Shots were fired, the men dashing forward, and sending the natives right and left at the point of their bayonets, till a few, led by Ensign Payne, reached where Dora Vaughan was struggling fiercely with her captors.

The young ensign threw his left arm round the girl, and held her, half-fainting now, while he delivered a few bold cuts, which, backed up as he was, quickly dispersed the cowardly Indians, who fled in every direction, the elephants lumbering off in an attempt at a trot, the Baboo's howdah rocking from side to side in a fashion decidedly wanting in dignity.

Morley had rescued the major's wife, who now lay on the ground in a swoon, with Anna, the Hindoo woman, bending over her, and trying to restore her to consciousness.

Dora, as soon as she could, withdrew herself from Payne's arm, and, trembling still, while her colour went and came, said simply, as she held out her hand—

"Thank you. That was very brave. I can never be grateful enough to you."

The young man took the little white fingers in his own, and pressed them, blushing like a girl, while he stammered out: "Not at all. At least—I mean—it was nothing."

At this moment Morley approached them, and shook hands formally with Dora, whose turn it was now to blush, the ensign looking on enviously.

"I do not understand this, Miss Vaughan," said Morley. "Where are your bearers and all your other servants?"

"That one, Mrs. Harland's maid, and the man you see leaning against that tree, are the only ones that stood by us. The others made a little show of fighting, and then the bearers set our gharries down, and I think they all ran away except one or two, who joined with that dreadful rajah."

"The scoundrels! The question is, how to get you to the regiment without bearers, for the poor men will have enough to do to get back at all to-night, and that I am determined to do, if possible. However, we must rest here for an hour."

Dora's eyes followed him with a puzzled, half-pained expression as he went to speak to the men, and afterwards to make inquiries of Mrs. Harland, who had recovered her spirits and was seated in her gharry, ready to laugh and chat quite composedly about their misfortunes.

"Was this the meeting looked forward to so long?" thought Dora. How cold and strange it seemed. She had imagined something so different; but she had tried to console herself with the thought that it was because there were others present that Morley had spoken to her as to a stranger, and when they were alone, no doubt he would be like himself again. But what made her heart full of misgivings was that there had been nothing—no slight pressure of the hand, or momentary tender glance in his eyes when they met hers—to tell that he was unchanged.

The voice of Payne broke in upon her reflections.

"I have succeeded in finding you a camp-stool, Miss Vaughan," he said in a half-apologetic tone. "I thought it would be pleasanter to sit and rest here than to stifle yourself in that wretched box of a thing any sooner than could be helped."

"You are very kind," said Dora as she took it, glancing up at him with a quivering lip, and eyes full of tears that she would not let fall.

The ensign, who had enlisted the services of the Mohammedan servant, in extricating the camp-stool from the mass of heterogeneous articles carried by a camel, was so taken aback that he could find nothing more to say, and left the girl to herself.

Seven of the bearers turned up in the course of an hour, so that, with the Mohammedan to assist, there was no difficulty about conveying the ladies back to the camp.

CHAPTER VIII.—"LET THE PAST BE FORGOTTEN."

"THERE, there, don't cry so, little one. I want to hear what it is all about. Now, sit down and tell me all your adventures. That's better."

The sister and brother were alone for the first time since their reunion, and Dora, who had maintained her composure till then, had given way at last to a violent fit of weeping, while Vaughan kissed and tried to console her, till she grew calmer.

"Poor little girl, I wish I had been with you. It should have gone hard with some of the scoundrels. But I have heard scarcely anything yet."

"I am very foolish, but I could not help it," said Dora. "But before I tell you about myself, how is

the poor boy who fainted as we came into the camp last night?"

"Payne? Oh, he is not very bad. He will be all right in a week. But you'd better not let him hear you call him a boy—he considers himself a man."

"He behaved like one, at any rate," said Dora; "but he only looks like a boy. It was he who—but I will begin at the beginning. We came as far as Bagra without any adventures at all; but before we left there, I noticed a man dressed in yellow silk or satin, mounted on an elephant, with a gilded howdah. He followed us all the way till we reached that palm tope where we had expected to overtake you. Oh, I can't tell you how disappointed I was to find you were all gone. He had been gaining on us for some time, and before we could try again to get away all his men were round us."

"Well," said Vaughan, "go on."

"Our servants most of them ran away. One called Chu—who, I believe, lamed one of our elephants before, so as to delay us, was with Rao—for that is what they call him. He is a rajah, or a nawab, or a baboo, I think."

"Baboo Jhod Rao," said her brother; "I have heard of him before; and," he muttered between his clenched teeth, "I hope I shall hear of him again."

"Why? I hope you never will. He is a villain; but I am safe, Rob, now. I have both you and—that is, I have you to take care of me."

"Go on with your story," said Vaughan, quickly, while he wondered inwardly how much she guessed from Morley's manner, and whether he had told her the truth.

"Our bearers tried to make a way through, and, when they found they could not, set us down, and I saw no more of them. Then that dreadful man came to me and told me to get out. Of course, I would not. He took hold of my wrist and dragged—look, there are the marks now—and just then Anna and Joom came; between us and stopped him. Some of his followers seized them directly; but Rao laughed, and said something in Hindustani, which Anna told me meant, 'Wait till we get back to Bagra.'"

"And who are Anna and Joom, pray?"

"Anna is a Hindoo woman, Mrs. Harland's maid. Her real name is Lalla, but Mrs. Harland likes Anna better. Joom is a Mohammedan; I don't know anything else about him."

Vaughan had heard the recital, with an angry colour flushing in his face at intervals, and his hands clenched themselves involuntarily. He was about to start up, when Dora laid her hand on his arm.

"I have not told you all yet. Rao was moving away, when we heard a cry for help, and an English girl dashed in amongst the party who were scattered about round us. She caught sight of me, and, running to me, begged me to take care of her, and keep her from those men who were following her. What could I do? I made her get in beside me, and she told me that she was the wife of a sergeant in your regiment. The man who carried her off asked Rao's permission to go on with his party, and he gave it, I think. The two servants stayed by us all night. In the morning Anna heard them say that Rao in-

tended to stay in the palm tope that day to rest his elephants, and then to take us all back."

"If I had been with the men who rescued you," said the young man, in a low, deep voice, "that villain should not have got off without something to make him remember me. But, we may meet yet; and if we do—but there, child, never mind what will happen in that case. I must go and see how Payne is getting on. He has a nasty cut in the shoulder, and said nothing about it—out of bravado, I suppose—until the heat and all had been too much for him."

As he walked down between the lines of tents, he met Morley, evidently coming away from a visit to Payne; and the young men's eyes met—Vaughan's full of scorn, under which the other did not shrink. On the contrary, Morley met his look with one of defiance, as he passed on, but he sighed as soon as he was out of hearing.

"Hard and stern as usual," he said to himself. "Rob is a capital fellow when he is in good humour; but, offend him, and he is more unrelenting than justice itself. I wonder what Dora will say to me when she knows the truth. Poor little girl, she looked very sweet and innocent yesterday—but compare her to Mabel! No, there is no comparison between them."

The subjects of his thoughts were sitting side by side in the colonel's tent. They had been school friends in England, and now the old intimacy was to be renewed, an hour or two in each other's society having made the two girls feel as familiar as of old. Besides, they were to be sisters before long, a fact which had made Dora's heart leap with pleasure as she heard it, for more than one reason.

"I was afraid, Mabel," she said, in a low tone, as they sat talking, "that you and Captain Morley might have grown to care for each other."

The sudden colour that mounted to Mabel's cheek did not pass unnoticed.

"For shame," she said, quickly. "Do you suppose I should allow myself to care for a man who was engaged to some one else?"

"You might not have been able to keep from doing so. Mabel, he is changed," said Dora, her voice trembling. "He spoke to me when we met like he would to a mere acquaintance. What does it mean? Tell me, has he forgotten me?"

"He may have wavered for a time," said Mabel, after a pause; "the separation was so long. But, trust me, your presence will make all right again."

A silence ensued, during which Dora's bosom heaved, and she struggled to keep down all sign of her agitation. At last she spoke.

"Mabel, it is no kindness to keep it from me. Has he ever spoken of—love to you?"

"Hush, dear! Never mind about what is past. Think only of the present. I am sure he will repent now of every thought that was disloyal to you."

"That is as good as answering 'Yes.' I understand now why he has not sought me yet. He is tired of me; but he shall not have the chance to tell me so. I will write to him, and give him back his word."

"Oh, no, no; pray don't do that;" and Mabel threw her arms round her friend, with tears spring-

ing to her eyes. "Oh, Dora, how you must hate me!"

But Dora was determined; and, sitting down to the table, with trembling hand, and tear-dimmed eyes, she penned a little note. Then, taking from the finger it had encircled so long, the ring Morley had given her, she kissed it before enclosing it with the letter in an envelope.

"He is free," she said to herself; "but even yet I may win him back, for Mabel never can be his."

Vaughan was reading to the ensign that afternoon as he lay on his charpoy, looking and feeling, as he expressed it, "awfully seedy." Morley came to the tent door, nodded to Payne, asked him how he was, and then looked at his companion, who remained with his eyes fixed on his book.

"Vaughan," he said, after a little hesitation, "can you spare me five minutes? I want to speak to you."

"Can you not say what you want to here?" said the other, coldly.

"No."

Vaughan rose.

"I shall be back directly," he said to Payne, who made a grimace at being left to his thoughts, and followed Morley.

Neither spoke for a few moments, as they walked to a quieter place; but as soon as they were out of hearing of any one, Morley began—

"Have you spoken to your sister about me? Have you told her your version of this affair?"

"I have scarcely mentioned your name to her. Why?"

"I am glad to hear it. Look here."

He showed Vaughan the few cold words in Dora's handwriting.

"She has taken the initiative, you see. I am most sincerely glad of it, and I hope my hold upon her may not have been so very great after all. Rob," he said, with an effort, as he took the note the other returned to him, "they say all's fair in love and war, but I don't think it. I own I abused your confidence, but you have won, and can afford to be generous. I have fought with myself till I can say, 'God bless you, and may you both be very happy.' Shake hands, and let the past be forgotten."

He held out his hand, and Vaughan made a motion as if to take it, but altered his mind.

"No," he said, slowly. "I will make no pretence of a friendship I do not feel. The past may be forgotten, but the effects remain."

He turned and walked back, leaving Morley motionless, looking after him with a strange expression on his face. As Vaughan's figure disappeared into the tent again, he drew a long, deep breath.

"So that is it," he said, half-aloud. "Robert Vaughan, you have made a great mistake. I had given her up, hard as it was; but now—now, if it be possible, I will win her yet, in spite of you."

Vaughan returned to his seat by Payne's bedside, and took up the book again, to look at it abstractedly without seeing a word.

There was a long silence, during which the ensign lay and watched the other's gloomy face. At last he said—

"Say, Vaughan, it's as good as a picture to look at you. I can see ever so many different things in

your face—first you are angry, then remorseful, and so on. But, I say, do tell me what's up between you and Morley, there's a good fellow."

His companion roused himself from his reverie.

"My dear Harry," he said, laughing, "you ought to have been a woman for several reasons. First, you look more like one in the face than you do like a man; then you blush like a girl; and lastly, you are as inquisitive as any woman I ever knew. I don't wonder my sister spoke of you as a boy."

"Did she, though. What did she say about me?"

"Is there anything else you would like to know?"

"Lots of things. But isn't she pretty, Vaughan? I was quite knocked off my legs when I saw her. I wouldn't mind being in Morley's shoes."

"Payne, you needn't say anything about it, but I may as well tell you. My sister's engagement to Morley is broken off."

CHAPTER IX.—"YOU RASCAL."

THE following night, tents were again struck soon after one, and piled on the backs of the camels, whose noisy remonstrances were heard in every direction, and the regiment was soon on the march once more.

There was little variety about these night marches. First the tramp, tramp, of many feet through the darkness, with the stars overhead looking down on the long file of English soldiers, native camp-followers, and baggage, streaming in a thin line across the wide, open, sandy country.

The stars soon grew pale, and dusk followed the darkness, to be quickly succeeded by daylight, as the sun peered over the distant horizon, without heralding his advance by flags of crimson and gold flung across the sky, but seen first, rising through a thick, muddy, yellow haze; and as if in revenge for their stealing a march on him while he slept, beginning as soon as he was visible to scorch and blind with his dazzling rays.

The halt this time was in the outskirts of a forest, and the hot and tired men welcomed gladly its shady recesses, which promised, if not coolness, at least less heat than they had been enduring.

Another night, Colonel Stafford reckoned, would bring them to Chutnegunj, where they would remain till further orders were received from headquarters.

From despatches received the previous day, all were aware that at any moment they might be called upon to defend themselves against the mutinous sepoys, several skirmishes having already occurred in the very neighbourhood they had now reached, and those ominous attendants on war, vultures and kites, hovering overhead.

"Now, if you'd taken my advice, sairgeant," said Corporal McAndrew to Davis, when breakfast was over, and the ordinary routine of idling away the day had commenced, "there wada hae been all that disturbance about the lassie. I saw what he was after, weel enew."

"Now I'll give you a bit of advice," said Davis, gruffly; "and as you're so ready about me not taking yours, just you take mine. Shut up, and let my wife alone. That's all."

"Weel, weel, lad, you needn't be sae huffy about it. But there are ithers besides Patan that have een to see she's bonny."

"Cuss him for a meddling idiot!" muttered Hand-some Dick to himself.

"Did you speak, laddie?"

"Yes, I did," said Davis, sharply.

"What did you say?"

"I said much obliged for the hint, or something like it."

"By the by, Sandy," said one of the men, coming up to them, "what a handsome woman that is, Mrs. Harland's maid."

"Ah, yes, that's the way wi' you lads," said McAndrew, shaking his head slowly; "your heads are turned at the sight of a strange woman, worshippers of idols, and a' manner of things, with their bangles and glittering ornaments, and such-like abominations."

"Oh, come, I thought you would admire her," said the man, with a wink at Davis. "She looks just the girl to make you a good wife. She speaks English as well as she does her own language. You had better think of it, because she mayn't have a chance long."

"I would go in for her seriously if I were you, McAndrew," said Davis, his face becoming more than usually one-sided as it relaxed into a broad grin, on the Scotchman walking away with a very solemn expression on his hard, rugged features.

Major Harland was cross that morning. He had lain down on his charpoy intending to have a good long sleep, when his wife came, and, sitting down by his side, persisted in dragging forth from the recesses of her memory all the disagreeables that had occurred to her and her charge from the moment when they said good-bye to their friends on board ship and started for the long voyage up to the present time.

However, she had only reached Malta, when a deep, a very deep snore, such as few men but the major could produce, told her that her dulcet tones had had the effect of a soporific, and she left him to his repose.

He was not, however, destined long to wake the echoes, if there are echoes in a tent; for before long his servant stood at his side with an intimation that the colonel wished to see him.

"What do you mean by shouting at me like that, you scoundrel?" shouted the major, waking up so suddenly that the native started back and looked at him nervously. "Do you suppose I'm deaf?"

"No, sahib," muttered the man, watching his master with evident dread. "I could not wake master before."

"If the colonel wants me, let him come here," growled the major, lying down again. "Now then, you villain, where are you going?"

"Tell colonel master can't come."

"How dare you!" thundered Major Harland, catching up a boot which he had taken off before settling himself for a nap.

The servant ducked so that the missile went over his head, and was about to beat a retreat when he was called back.

"Come here, you rascal, and bring that boot with

you. Now put them both on. The wrong foot, you blundering idiot!"

The last sentence was accompanied with a gentle reminder from the major's toes which made the attendant wince, and hasten to put the boots on the right feet, and then to get out of their reach.

This man rejoiced in a name so long, and of such singular orthography, that the major declined to use it, so that his servant had become accustomed to answering to every epithet his master could think of. So much had the habit grown upon him that he started and turned when stationed behind his master at the mess-table, if any one chanced to make use of the words scoundrel, villain, or anything of that description.

The major was in the act of brushing his hair when Colonel Stafford appeared in the tent doorway.

These two were old friends, and a long conversation ensued, the colonel, whose belief in the speedy subduing of the native forces was not so great as that of the major, using every argument to bring the other round to his opinions.

"You see, Harland, they have no occasion to be particularly attached to us, any of them."

"Not attached to us, why they—you black villain, be off with you—you're not wanted at present; and don't let me see you again till I ask for you."

As this adjuration was accompanied by a water-bottle from the table, the servant who had been about to enter, in fear and trembling lest he should be required, and not be there to answer the call, retired with more haste than elegance.

"Confound him, he's gone, and I wanted him to pick up those pieces of glass, and take that water off the carpet. What was I saying? Ah, I remember; attached to us. Why, my dear Stafford, they worship us as superior beings. They are devoted to us, and well they may be, after all we have done for them. If I headed a regiment of sepoys, I should place the blindest faith in them. Let them see that you trust them completely, and they—"

"Will murder you, and torture your helpless little children," finished the colonel, grimly.

"Have it as you like," said the major; "but we shall see who is right."

"And very soon, too," said the colonel. "From what I hear, I imagine we shall be wanted to assist in the defence of Chutnegunj; but I have no certain information as to that yet. However, we must be prepared for any emergency that may arise. Listen, there seems to be some noise outside. I must see what it is."

He went out hastily, and the major prepared to follow him.

"Here! hi! where's that scoundrel?" he shouted. But the scoundrel was out of hearing, and the major had to complete his attire without assistance, after which he hurried out to find the men being got under arms.

"What is the matter?" he asked of the first man he encountered.

At that instant the bugle sounded the call, and the man hurried away, his answer being heard with difficulty as he vanished.

"Attacked by the enemy's sowars, sir."

An American Bluebird.

SHORTLY after noon of a beautiful June day, many years ago, the writer of this article started forth, as was his custom in his unregenerate youth and before the game law was amended, in search of adventures and birds' eggs; but principally birds' eggs.

He had not gone far when he saw seated upon a branch of an ancient pear tree a motherly-looking bluebird, with an apparently well-behaved family of three. He no sooner saw this beautiful family group than he determined to possess one of its members, and immediately proceeded to carry this determination into effect.

As they were out of reach, they must be started from their position before anything could possibly be done. This was easily accomplished, and while the parent bird piloted two of them away in safety, the other, probably a fast youth who was impatient of parental control, took another direction, determined, apparently, to shift for himself. But he found, as many another in his position has found, that he lacked strength and experience.

He flew a short distance, hotly pursued by his prospective captor; but his strength soon failed him and he was constrained to alight, which, from inexperience, he did in a rather awkward manner. Striking upon his feet, he fell forward, and turned completely over before he came to a perfect understanding of his position. But he was not to be taken yet, and immediately launched out upon another flight, shorter than the first. His manner of alighting was very similar to that already described; but he was now too much exhausted to attempt another flight. Casting his eye about him he saw a large oak leaf, under which he immediately thrust his head, and imagined, in his simplicity, that he was safe from all danger; but he was mistaken. He was so large, or more properly the leaf was so small, that the greater portion of his body was left exposed. He was picked up tenderly and carefully, and, with his prize securely held, the captor fled away at more than ordinary speed (wishing to avoid being himself captured), as, in the excitement of the chase, he had been led into the backyard of a crusty neighbour, who would probably, had he known the facts, have taken measures that might have resulted in mutual dissatisfaction.

Sialia was duly installed in a large cage, and his captivity commenced. For a long time he was very disconsolate, and seemed in danger of going into a decline; but the elastic spirits of youth triumphed, and he forgot his earlier days and settled down contentedly to his new life. Perhaps the attainment of this happy state of feeling was hastened by the introduction between the bars of his cage of a few of the creeping things of earth. It may be here remarked that the quantity of food which would disappear into that cavernous opening in his head, commonly called a mouth, was wonderful—even fearful to contemplate. He grew constantly in size and beauty—and certainly there was abundant opportunity for improvement in the latter respect, a young bluebird being only second in ugliness to a young robin.

His life was uneventful and apparently happy for a time; but one day, while upon another predatory expedition, a goldfinch's nest was discovered, and after some trouble, one of the young was secured and borne homeward. This infant, together with another of the same species, taken a few days before, was put in charge of *Sialia*, to be educated and reared in the way they should go.

Upon their being placed in the cage with him, he seemed for a time to be at a loss as to how he should conduct himself, and from time to time he cast curious glances from the corners of his eyes towards these (to him) strange birds. But this constraint on his part soon wore off. After sitting quietly for a time—no doubt meditating and coming to the conclusion that these new companions of his would be his rivals in the attention of his friends, and being moved by jealousy—he commenced, at first cautiously, and then boldly, to crowd them towards the end of the perch. As he was much the largest of the three, he soon had them in uncomfortable close quarters, so close, indeed, that one of the finches, in fear of being crushed, pushed through between the wires of the cage, and flew aimlessly about the room. It was soon caught, however, and returned to the cage.

Finding that this manner of proceeding would afford him no permanent relief, he refrained from any further practice of it, and they lived as peacefully as might be under the circumstances. In fact, after a time, he came to take great interest in their welfare; and to prevent them from injuring themselves by over-eating, as in their youthful carelessness they were liable to do, he would gorge himself nearly to bursting. But he was not accurate in his calculations as to the amount which a finch should eat, and it was found advisable to separate the finches from *Sialia*.

He found great pleasure in playing with pins, and he was frequently with difficulty prevented from swallowing them and thus bringing himself to an untimely end. He always resisted these precautionary efforts in his behalf, and protested loudly and volubly upon every such occasion.

He one day escaped from his cage and took a prominent position on the top of a neighbouring tree. Of course, the first thought was how to get him back to his cage. Nothing would induce him to return until a piece of bread soaked in water—his favourite food—was temptingly displayed before him, when he immediately descended and allowed himself to be caught, and returned to his captivity.

If petted and handled often, he became quite fearless; but if neglected for a few days his wild nature asserted itself, and he would grow suspicious of every one who approached him. Sometimes, in his more trustful mood, he would carefully push himself into the pocket or sleeve of the person who was holding him, and seemed not in the least disconcerted at the strange quarters in which he found himself.

The cat, which was full-grown when *Sialia* was first caught, became accustomed to seeing him, and at last took hardly any notice of him; but he never failed to notice her when she gave him an opportunity. The cage was frequently left upon the floor

or upon a low chair, and if the cat passed near enough, her tail was almost certain to get a pinch, which made her in time come to consider that neighbourhood an unpleasant one.

His door being one day left open, he appeared unexpectedly at the dinner-table, or, rather, upon the table. He immediately helped himself to that which stood nearest, which, unfortunately, happened to be salt. This evidently did not suit his taste, for he sprang back a short distance, while a look of astonishment and wonder spread itself over his expressive countenance. Then he commenced a series of backward movements round and round that salt dish, shaking his head violently in his efforts to free his bill from the salt, particles of which still clung to it. At another time he inadvertently took a sip of hot tea, and afterwards he was very cautious how he tasted anything with which he was not familiar.

It was his usual custom to keep very late hours, eating and amusing himself by lamplight at any time between the hours of nine and twelve in the evening. He took great pleasure in catching flies about the room in the daytime or evening, as the case might be—it seemed to make little difference with him. He would perch upon a finger, and allow himself to be carried from place to place in search of prey. Upon being placed in reach of an insect, he would immediately seize it, and swallow it, with evident relish. If the fly was beyond the reach of the person holding him, he would leave his position on the finger, and fly up to the place which it occupied, and, after disposing of it, would return to the perch. Of course he always had better success in the evening, because, while he seemed to see perfectly well by lamplight, the flies were not so fortunate, and fell an easy prey.

His fate is still a mystery. One morning in the early summer, when he had been with us for but little more than a year, we found his cage-door partly opened, and *Sialia* was not inside. We never saw him again. The cage stood near an open window, and it is possible that, finding his door open, or having opened it himself, he passed out through it and the open window to freedom—or, perhaps, to death—which latter is probable from his inexperience to take care of himself.

AN American paper mentions a canary bird that whistles waltzes. He has been in training for nearly a year, and now goes through the whole music of a German waltz. Whenever there is a false note Dick warbles a while, and then begins again. When the bird was just off the nest his mistress put him into a dark room, where he saw no light and heard no sound. Then daily she played the waltz to him, two or three times a day, for fifteen or twenty minutes every time. The instrument was an organ, with the shrill stops out. At the end of a month or two the bird began to sound a note of the waltz, then another. Soon it combined them, and after a time he whistled an entire strain. It was nearly a year, however, before his education was complete. Mocking-birds may also be trained in this way. A music-box is very useful, and saves much labour in the long course of the bird's musical teaching.

Recollections of Texan Horses.

THE remarks of your Chicago namesake are hardly what I should have expected to emanate from an American. I can tell him that the Texan animals are better than he credits them with being. I have had some heavy animals from there expressly for draught, and they worked without shoes over roads that can challenge any in New Jersey, or anywhere else.

Now, I want you to understand that I was not obliged in the slightest to work my animals unshod. I have made some railways in South and Central America, and had the best English railway blacksmiths that I could procure in England, all of them shoeing-smiths; and in works of this magnitude the cost of shoeing would never be thought of.

As in many places the lines were located in vast solitudes, almost untrodden by man until then, it was necessary to begin by constructing a common road close alongside, or as near as possible to, the intended railway. Along this road all the provisions of the workmen, as well as a good deal of heavy bridge-work, tools, &c., had to be taken; and it may be easily conceived that, as Mr. Sidney says, my horses were "kept to do something," and that it would never have done for me to hazard the success of an enterprise of this sort by experimenting on a crotchet of my own.

By not shoeing my animals I did with about a half of the number that I should have required of shod ones, because I had no lame ones, and that I had no iron and coal to carry up country to place in roadside forges to shoe them with; although I do not think I should have used so much coal, as I should probably have imported ready-made shoes, and have had them put on cold. Besides, I should have required extra smiths, who would also have required extra provisions, and thus there would have been an extra call on horse labour, which was what was most to be dreaded, especially as the maize they ate up country had to be taken up by the horses themselves. So I do not think that doubling them would have done more than meet the case.

When I say that I had no lame ones, of course I mean lamed by fair work. Horses sometimes met with accidents, and there is a disease called "hormiguillo," which knocks them up in a very short time. When a horse gets it he will stamp his foot; and if you care about looking, you will see that a white powder has been shaken out of the hoof through the cleft of the frog, and then, if you are curious enough to examine this powder with a magnifier, you will find it to consist of mites, all alive and kicking. But, fortunately, the remedy is very simple, and acts immediately. You lift up the foot, and pour in some kerosene, and you keep it up for some little time; this poisons the whole brood. But you must act promptly, or you will have every horse catch it. It is much more common in some countries than in others.

Another nuisance, also not met with everywhere out there, is the tarantula, a poisonous spider that burrows in the ground. When a horse is grazing, and puts a foot in the vicinity of his hole, he rushes out, and bites him on the pastern. The irritation

and inflammation this causes is so intense that a violent laminitis instantly ensues, and there is only one way of saving his hoof, and even then you must find out promptly that he is bitten, or he will lose it. This remedy is to put him in a cool stream (they are not all cool out there), and keep him in it for a week up to his knees, and so fastened (with a manger before him) that he cannot get to a place where he can lift his foot out of the water. This is a certain cure, and sometimes in four days.

Should he lose his hoof through want of prompt action, he is left loose on the bank of a river, and it grows again, but it takes six months before you can work him; and that hoof never gets as big or as good as its predecessor, yet still he can do without a shoe. This happened to one of my saddle horses, yet I was riding him again in six months, and you know my weight. From the foregoing you may judge whether I have confidence in naked hoofs. Now, I have never seen, amongst the many hundreds of thousands of unshod horses I have met, a single case of sandcrack or seedy toe, or ringbones or sidebones, or an animal that either cut or brushed himself, or navicular disease, or corns, or pumiced foot. Wind-galls I have seen, although less than here, so I conclude they are not caused by the shoe entirely. I have also seen a few spavins, but I found that they were generally attributable to kicks from other horses.—*Live Stock Journal*.

INDIGESTION IN HORSES.—Indigestion in horses usually arises from overworking, injudicious and irregular feeding, poor grooming, and poorly ventilated stables. Sometimes it arises from overfeeding, and letting the horse stand idle for several days, and then overworking.

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A FAVOURED MISSIVE.



Dutch the Diver:

The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—"LIKE A STRANGE GREY SNAKE."



MEANWHILE the divers steadily worked on with old Rasp, who was closely watched by the Cuban, tyrannical to a degree, while Oakum never once looked at them.

Sand, rock, and what was harder to move—namely, masses of coral—were dragged away that day, and the Cuban's impatience was somewhat alleviated on the sight of a few more stray ingots, forerunners of what he hoped to get later on;

and again night put an end to their labours, the tired divers, who on this day had been helped by the captain, doctor, and naturalist, all working like common sailors, and watched by armed men.

They were up and waiting beneath the cabin skylight the next morning before the day broke, and once more came the bird with a welcome message.

It was very brief, but it gave them hope in the midst of their despair, for it ran as follows:—

"You'll get no more messages, for it ar'n't safe-like, as friends are working for all on you. Never mind, lads, and let some one watch under the cabin light till something comes."

This was enigmatical, but it set them on their guard, and they worked that day more cheerfully, feeling that a plot must be on foot for their rescue; Dutch's only fear, as he gazed at the two women, being that it might come too late.

That night Dutch, weary as he was, watched himself beneath the cabin hatch; but many weary hours passed without anything but the talking of the watch being heard; and at last he felt that at all hazards he must sleep, when he started, for something round and soft suddenly fell though the open light upon his head, and, feeling about on the floor, his hand came into contact with a handkerchief, in which something soft was tied up. A powder, evidently—yes, gunpowder.

He stood thinking, with about a couple of pounds of the combustible in his hand, thinking of what power it would have if exploded, and longing for the battery and the dynamite cartridges, as he thought that if matters came to the worst he would blow up the ship sooner than the women then beneath their charge should suffer insult.

During the next few days the diving work progressed steadily, and, with the exception of a few interruptions by sharks, all went well; but not the slightest sign struck Dutch as evincing a desire on the part of Rasp or Oakum to make any communication, and both he and his friends were puzzled, wondering which of them would be the faithful one, for they felt that they would be too sanguine if they imagined that both were on their side, though Mr. Parkley was as convinced that Rasp was at work for them, as Dutch was that it was Oakum.

All the while both were working hard in their interest to contrive the recapture of the ship, but the difficulty was that the whole party were so watched that they could find no means of communication; but still they hoped.

The arms were stowed in the cabin which Lauré had taken for his own use, and which he shared with one of the men, whom he seemed to trust entirely; but who was a thoroughly drunken scoundrel, and who used to make Mr. Meldon's blood boil by the way he used to stand and watch Bessy Studwick whenever she was on deck in the evening, for Lauré had insisted that the women should share his prisoners' walk for a couple of hours each day.

"If I could get at those tools," thought Oakum, "and pass 'em down, we should be all right, and might make the scoundrels shake in their shoes." But no opportunity occurred, and the glorious bright days glided by.

The treasure had been thoroughly reached at last, and in a hopeless way Dutch and Mr. Parkley worked on, bullied sharply by Rasp, who threatened short supplies of air if more work were not done, and the consequence was that an immense treasure in silver bars was recovered, though for the most part terribly corroded and mingled with calcareous matter.

At last the time arrived when Mr. Parkley came up announcing that the last ingot had been found, and that nothing remained but the black and rotting wood.

"Nonsense," exclaimed Lauré, angrily; "there must be hundreds more. Here, you Pugh, it is your turn to go down now. Make a good search, and don't come back till you have found more."

The eyes of the two men encountered as Lauré spoke, and a strange foreboding feeling came over Dutch as he slowly made his preparations. It seemed to him that it was quite possible now the treasure of two sunken galleons had been recovered

Lauré might forego further search, having determined to make sure of his find; and if this were the case, the young man argued, he might now begin to put in force some of his former tactics. What if he were now to try to get rid of him for Hester's sake—for the sake of the woman who had repelled all his advances with contempt, but who was now completely in his power.

Then he had hardly noticed her of late; but there was that in the Cuban's eyes that told of smothered volcanic passion that might at any moment burst into flame, and Dutch felt that if he escaped from injury that evening, he would try and bring forward the plot that must be now nearly ripe, and strike before it was too late.

There were men on board who would after the first blow was successfully struck, he argued, be ready to side with the victorious party, irrespective of whom it might be, and this blow must be struck and at once before it was too late.

He was brought back to the realities of his position by a few sharp words from Lauré, supplemented by a brutal jerk from Rasp; but as he secured portions of his waterproof dress, and glanced round the deck, everything seemed to be imprinted on his brain with vivid force. There was the last heap of wet silver, mingled with stone, shell, and seaweed; the little streams of water trickling from it to the scuppers; and there by the pump, which it had become their duty to work, were the captain, the doctor, and Mr. Wilson; while, just emerging from the cabin, and supporting John Studwick each by a hand, came Hester and Bessy, to lead the invalid to a seat by the side.

Dutch saw Lauré's eyes flash as Hester came on deck, and the young man's veins tingled with rage.

But he was helpless, and could only obey. And besides, he felt that this was no time for annoyance coming to his young wife; so, exchanging glances with her, and trying to impart confidence in her breast, though he felt none, he prepared to go down.

But first he took one glance round at the beautiful sea and shore, and then, with the foreboding of coming danger on the increase, he assumed his helmet; it was roughly secured by Rasp; and he walked to the ladder at the side with the old fellow guiding him.

As he turned to place his feet on the steps, it might have been imagination, but certainly Rasp looked at him through the glass windows of the helmet in a peculiar way, and, more significant still, the young man felt the life-line thrust into his hand.

"Then there is danger," thought Dutch, as he lowered himself down, and his heart began to beat violently; but as his head disappeared beneath the surface of the water, and the old familiar sensations of diving were experienced, he began to smile at his terrors, and to accuse himself of want of manliness.

"Rasp's rough behaviour is all a blind to throw dust in Lauré's eyes, and the look and the significant placing of the life-line in my hands means that something is to take place to-night."

He was convinced of this now, and reaching the bottom he took up an iron rod, and began to move slowly about over the rotten timbers that had been uncovered, and to probe and search in all directions.

The sand had been cleared out of the vessel all but amidships, and there they had at the first attempt come upon remains that showed how a large number of the crew must have been below deck when the ship sunk; and as the silver seemed to lie away from here, Dutch and Mr. Parkley had agreed to have the bones buried in the sand where they lay; but now that this imperative order had come from their taskmaster, Dutch took the piece of iron, and began to search with it by thrusting it down into the sand.

He shuddered as he did so, for he could feel that it certainly came in contact with buried bones, sometimes, by the feel, with a skull; and several times he left off with a shudder, resuming his task in a helpless way, and wondering whether success were to attend their effort, and when it would be made.

Just then the recollection of the rich treasure in gold that was known only to himself came to his mind, and he smiled as he thought of what would be Lauré's feelings if he knew what had been left behind. And as he thought of this, he thrust the iron rod down once more, and his heart began to beat again, for, unless he was much mistaken, there, beneath the remains of the former occupants of the galleon, lay just such a receptacle as the one he had formerly found.

He probed again and again, making deep holes in the sand, which were filled up directly he withdrew the rod; and now, marking out the spot, he became convinced, not that it was gold, but that another goodly treasure of metal lay beneath the sand.

It was all plain enough—just a square receptacle, all metal, he believed gold, but certainly silver, was there; and as soon as he thrust the probe down outside that square it went down—down through wood and sand to any depth.

"It is another treasure of gold," exclaimed Dutch; and his words sounded strangely to him as they were spoken in the hollow of his helmet, and he paused to consider whether he should announce his discovery, or keep it secret like the last.

"It shall be a secret," he said. "We may live to survive this unfortunate voyage, and if we do, may come again, for here is what would recompense us for all our pains, and it is no uncertainty. No, there is the treasure, and——"

He signalled sharply for more air, looking up through the clear, bright sunlit water; and as he did so, feeling that the supply was stopped, he saw that the long india-rubber tube had been cut, and was sinking slowly towards him, like some strange grey snake.

CHAPTER XL.—DUTCH IN PERIL.

HESTER turned shuddering away as she saw Lauré's eyes fixed upon her, and soon began to tremble as she recalled a previous occasion when, under a threat, the Cuban exacted a promise from her—one that, believing her husband's life at stake, she had given.

She tried to look in other directions, to devote herself to attending on poor, weak John Studwick, but it was impossible; and strive how she would, her attention was constantly drawn back to the Cuban, who, with a smile upon his lip, watched

her anxiety, and horrified her by coming to where the tube ran from the air-pump over the side, and, picking it up, held it in his hand as he glanced at her white face.

Then he threw it down again, and turning to the men about him, spoke first to one and then to another, with the result that each of the scoundrels seemed placed upon his guard, and to be ready for any emergency.

Lauré, according to his custom, was armed to the teeth, carrying quite a little arsenal in his belt; and after going round to the men, he advanced to where Rasp was standing.

"Is that fellow working well?" he said, aloud.

"Pretty well," growled Rasp, taking some snuff. "Getting a bit lazy, though. He don't work like he did when he was at it for himself."

Lauré walked up and down the deck three or four times, and then stopped short by Hester, who shrank from his touch, as he laid his hand upon her arm.

"When is pretty Hester Pugh coming to make amends for all her coldness?" he said, with a malicious smile.

She did not speak, only cowered away, with her eyes fixed on his, like a bird beneath the glance of a snake.

"I say, when is pretty little Hester going to reward me for all my patience and perseverance?" he repeated. "No, no, don't run away, little timidity! I am very dreadful, am I not? I am a terrible fellow to seize upon the ship, and make the scoundrels who tried to rob me work for my treasure. What, no answer?"

Hester could not have spoken had she wished, for her position seemed to paralyze her. An indignant word might cause the wretch who persecuted her to endanger once more her husband's life; and so she crouched there trembling.

The doctor and Captain Studwick were at the pumps, but she dare not appeal to them lest more mischief should befall; and hence she sat there trembling, feeling how thoroughly they were in the monster's power.

"She is coy and angry at our neglect," said Lauré, sneeringly. "Well, well, we must excuse it, for we have been too busy even to think of love. Let us apologise, then, and say that we love her more than ever; and now that the work is nearly done, we are going to seek our reward henceforward here. Hester."

He laid his hand once more upon her arm, but she shrank shuddering away; and the Cuban walked angrily to the side, where, with the tube in his hand, he stood gazing down, and watching the action of Dutch as he moved from place to place, far below in the pure water.

He glanced round once, and saw that Hester, with dilated eyes, was watching his every movement; and feeling that he had, as it were, her heart-strings in his hand, he pretended to ignore her presence on the other side of the deck, and played with the tube that was the life of Dutch Pugh, now pinching it, or bending it so that the supply of air was slightly hindered; when Rasp, unobserved, signalled to those at the air-pump with one hand,

causing them to accelerate their toil and so keep up the supply.

Just then, though so weak that he could hardly walk, John Studwick crossed the deck. Bessy would have accompanied him, but he hoarsely told her to keep back, and so soft and slow was his step that he had his thin white hand upon the Cuban's arm before the latter was aware of his presence.

"You cowardly cur!" said John Studwick, glancing at him with his unnaturally bright eyes, and with his hollow cheeks burning with a hectic flush. "I can hardly think it possible that God can let such a villain live."

Lauré started as if he had been stung, and his hand sought one of the pistols in his belt.

"Pistols, yes," said John Studwick. "But, pistols or no pistols, if I had the strength of a man instead of being a helpless wreck, one of us should not leave this deck alive."

Captain Studwick and the doctor were intensely excited, but they dared not leave the air-pump lest the supply should fail for Dutch; but Mr. Wilson drew nearer, and stood with parted lips and trembling hands watching the scene, while some of the armed crew now began to take an interest in the affair.

"Go down to your berth—to your kennel—sick dog that you are," cried Lauré, savagely, and he showed his white teeth like the animal he mentioned. "Speak to me like that again, and you shall not live long enough to see your pretty sister become my mistress, like Hester Pugh."

"You cowardly ruffian!" cried the young man, tottering on the brink of the grave as he was, and as he spoke he sprang at Lauré's throat, clinging there with both hands, and in his surprise the Cuban staggered back. But only for a moment; the next, Lauré had shaken him off, and as the feeble man tottered away the ruffian drew a revolver, cocked it rapidly, and fired at the invalid as he fell.

The bullet flew up through the rigging, for Wilson struck up his arm, and Lauré turned savagely upon him, while the captain and the doctor were starting from the air-pump to go to Wilson's aid, when they were paralysed by a shout from Rasp.

"Pump, pump! or you'll kill Dutch Pugh."

Hester uttered a wild shriek, and the handles flew round again as she darted to the air pump, and, as if feeling that she could help her husband, seized the tube.

This cry and her act saved Wilson's life; for Lauré, not a yard from him, was taking deadly aim at his head, his countenance bearing plainly stamped in it the determination to slay some one. Seeing Hester's act, then, he lowered the pistol, stuck it in his belt, and, as if the opportunity had come, and an excuse for revenge, he drew the keen sword he carried, and with one cut divided the tube as it lay upon the deck.

Hester uttered another cry, and then stood, like the rest, paralyzed, as the tube writhed like a living creature, undulated, and then rapidly ran over the side, when the woman's whole nature seemed changed. From a gentle, timid, shrinking creature she was transformed into one reckless of life and free from fear; and, throwing herself upon Lauré,

she caught the sword by the hilt, and tried to wrest it from his hand, while he, astonished at the change, gave way.

The cutting of the tube had set the two men free, or it would have gone hard with Hester. Captain Studwick flew to her help, armed with an iron screw-hammer that he had caught up, while the doctor seized a lever, and ran to assist; but only to receive a heavy blow from behind, as, at a call from Lauré, his men closed in, and the struggle became general.

CHAPTER XLI.—RASP'S PLANS.

DUTCH PUGH'S doom was not sealed, for, as he was struggling on, holding his breath, and trying to reach the ladder and climb up before he should become senseless, there came help.

It was Lauré's act, he knew, and even in those excited moments he could tell that here was the meaning of the forebodings he had felt, and the thought of Hester left in the villain's power half-maddened him, as his temples throbbed, his senses began to reel, and he staggered, and felt that something was holding him back from the haven of safety he sought to reach.

Pleasant old memories began to float before his vision—days when he had wandered with Hester through the sunny country lanes, and she confessed her love for him; and all seemed bright and beautiful. He was in no pain, and he only knew that he had just reached the ladder, and was trying to ascend, when a dark cloud floated before his eyes—a cloud of dark-red blood, and then there was a shock and a concussion, and he knew no more.

The shock was the jerking of the life-rope, and the concussion was his helmet striking against the side of the ladder; for as the struggle went on, Rasp gave the word to Oakum and Pollo, they hauled together, and in spite of the weight, ran Dutch up to the side in a few moments, dragged him through the gangway, and as he lay on the deck, Rasp rapidly stooped down, and turning a screw, threw open one of the plate glass eyes of the helmet.

"Further this way," whispered Rasp again, and, Oakum stooping down with him, they dragged the senseless man along the deck, away from the struggle that was going on.

At the end of two or three minutes, Oakum and Rasp, who felt that the time was not ripe, and that any attempt at resistance on their part would have resulted, as they were unarmed, in failure, saw the captain, Mr. Meldon, and Wilson driven below, Mr. Parkley, in his cumbersome diving suit, being thrust down directly after; and then the conquerors turned towards John Studwick, who was lying panting where he had been dashed, with his sister holding his head in her lap, while Hester had run to the side of her husband.

Old Rasp ground his teeth as, at the Cuban's orders, the invalid was roughly raised by the men, in spite of Bessy's shrieks, dragged from her, and thrown down the hatchway, while Bessy was dragged to the fore cabin and thrust down there.

"I'm a saving of all this up, Sam Oakum," whispered Rasp. "I shall pay it all off on Mr. Blackguard here some day."

"Some night," whispered Sam Oakum back in a choking voice, "and that's to-night."

"What did you drag that dog here for?" cried the Cuban, now coming up, sword in hand, and making a cut at the prostrate figure, as Hester tried to relieve Dutch of his helmet.

"Here, mind what you're after," said Rasp, snappishly, warding off the blow with an iron bar. "Don't be a fool. 'Spose you spyle that injy-rubber soot, how are we going to get another?"

The Cuban turned upon him furiously; but as the quaint old fellow seemed not in the least afraid, he turned it off with a laugh.

"What did I pull him up, for, eh?" said Rasp.

"Why, becous I haven't done with him. I haven't forgot my per centage on the silver, captain, and this one's worth half-a-dozen of that t'other old chap."

"You're a strange fellow, Rasp," said the Cuban.

"Strange, am I? I've been a diver this forty year a'most, and I've never had such diving as this afore. It's too good to be spyled because you get wild, so now then."

"You're right, Rasp," said the Cuban, laughing, as Hester darted an indignant look at the gruff and apparently heartless old fellow. "Here, a couple of you, throw this dog down the cabin."

As a couple of the men approached, the Cuban took a turn up and down the deck, and Hester started as Rasp, while apparently leaning over the helmet, whispered—

"Don't you resist, my pretty one, but go as he tells you, there's help a-coming."

Lauré turned sharply back, stooped down, and caught the trembling woman by the wrist.

"Enough of this," he exclaimed, sharply, for one peculiarity of the man was that every time he was about to proceed to some act of violence he worked himself into a rage. "You come to me now."

Hester hung back from him and tried to cling to her prostrate husband, but remembering the words of old Rasp, she suffered Lauré to lead her forward.

"That's more sensible," he said, with a look that made her shrink. "To-morrow we will change cabins with those aft."

He led her to the hatch, down which Bessy had been thrust, and ordered her to descend, which she did after a trembling glance at her husband, who still lay insensible, but with Rasp and Oakum bending over him; and the next moment, finding that she was evidently in the part that the Cuban had had furnished for his own use, and beyond which was his little sleeping cabin, she was clasped in Bessy Studwick's arms.

"Why have you not thrown that dog overboard or below?" cried the Cuban, returning to where Dutch lay.

"Don't you be in such a 'nation hurry," growled Rasp. "I'm not going to have my helmets and diving tackle misused by nobody. These things may be worth fifty thousand pounds yet, and if they're bruised or have holes broke in 'em, how are we to get 'em mended?"

As he spoke, Rasp, with Oakum's help, dragged off the india-rubber suit, and removed the helmet very carefully.

"There," he said, "now you can have him; and

none of your pitching him down like you did the others. He's valuable, he is."

The Cuban kicked the senseless man brutally as he lay, and two of the sailors taking him by the legs and arms, he was dragged to the hatch, and then drawn heavily down the stairs.

"If I don't warm the wax of that fellow's ears for all this, Sam Oakum, my name aint Rasp," said the old fellow, laughing to himself. "I want one of these here diving soots very pertickler, my friend—very pertickler, indeed. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Right," said Oakum, in a low voice. "To-night, mind."

"Oakum," said the Cuban, sharply; and the old sailor faced round, wondering whether he had been heard, while Rasp went on mending and arranging his diving tackle as if nothing was the matter.

"Sir, to you," said Sam.

"I shall sail to-night or to-morrow morning; have all ready."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Sam, cheerfully; and then, to himself, "perhaps you will, and for a longish voyage."

"We've got all the silver here, and I think I shall try one more spot."

"All right, cap'n," said Sam; "nothing like having a good cargo while you're about it."

"Have all ready," said the Cuban, gloomily.

"Right, cap'n," said Sam, "but—"

"Well, what?" said the Cuban, looking sharply round as if in search of danger; but the shore was on every side verdant and beautiful, the sea calm and bright, and nothing to show the horrors of the ship but a few spots of blood upon the white deck.

"I was on'y going to say as if I was skipper I should put off the start till the morning."

"Why?" said the Cuban, looking at him searchingly.

"The sun'll be down afore we could work out of this snug place so as to ketch the breeze, and there's a rock there, and a rock here, and a couple more to starboard, and three off yonder to port. I shouldn't like to take off a bit of the schooner's keel, or poke a hole in her bottom with all that silver aboard. A man likes to obey orders, capen; but when he's got a stake in the safe running of the cargo, it makes him partickler like."

"You're right," said the Cuban. "At daybreak, then."

"Daybreak it is," said Sam, giving his trousers a hitch; and taking out a little silver pipe, he blew a shrill note. "All hands ahoy!" he roared, and as the men collected, he set to work clearing away the lumber, coiling ropes ship-shape, hoisted a boat that had been down over the side, and then altered his mind and had it lowered again. "We shall want it for towing her head round in the morning," he said, and so busied himself as to have everything well forward, while the Cuban looked on with an approving eye.

"You shan't be forgotten for all this, Sam Oakum," he said.

"Thanky, capen, thanky," said Sam, as the Cuban walked forward, and the old sailor filled a pipe for an extra luxury, just as it was getting dark.

"Here, you black-faced son of a coal-hole, give's a light," cried Sam, loudly, as he went to the galley where Pollo was busy preparing tea for all on board.

"Yes, Mass Oakum," said the black, flinching from a blow aimed at him as he spoke; when, to the poor fellow's horror, Sam seized him by the scruff of the neck, pushed his head into an open barrel, and whispered—

"Don't you make a sound, Pollo, old man. It's all my larks. Don't laugh, you lubber, but get your biggest carving knife, and hide here in the middle watch: there's a game on, my lad, and I want you to help to retake the ship."

"Oh, golly, Mass Oakum, sah, dat I will; I bress de Lor', sah, you not big ruffyun after all. I bress de Lor'."

"Hush! hold your tongue, lad. Mum's the word. Now then, you black nigger, look alive with that grub," he said aloud. "I'm 'most starving."

He came out puffing away at his pipe as the Cuban came slowly along the deck, looking suspiciously at Sam, who, however, did not seem to heed his look, but fixing himself on the bulwark, with his legs under him, and his arm round one of the shrouds, he half-shut his eyes, and smoked away as if with real enjoyment, blinking at the shore, and all the while ripening his plans for the fierce work to be undertaken that night.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

Leadenhall Market.

WHEN farmers and gardeners and other such rustic folk find themselves let loose in London, and bound to discover ways to kill time, the markets are sure to obtain some amount of attention. There the work that is carried on in the country is mounted on a triumphal car, to take its way with honour to the place of sacrifice, and wondering eyes behold and admire the glorious in-pouring of food of all sorts from the producing fields to this great hungry city.

We have but two markets worthy of the name in London. One of the two is the comparatively new and scarcely yet completed Meat and Poultry Market of the Corporation, forming a noble block of buildings on the site of old Smithfield. Light, airy, and clean, roomy, substantial, and handsome, this market deserves the attention of our country cousins, both as a model and as a centre of trade. To walk through from end to end, and make an occasional *détour* into the lateral alleys, will, by the time the task is done, impress the mind somewhat forcibly as to the consuming powers of the metropolis. The other is the Cattle Market in the Caledonian-road—another of the splendid achievements of the Corporation. There may be found a grand cattle show every Monday, open to all comers, and nothing to pay.

When the great Christmas sale of beasts takes place, it is the grandest cattle show in the world; for other great markets show us only one or two breeds, but here we see all the breeds represented in the finest examples the art of man can produce;

and we may see a little more of their tempers and idiosyncrasies than they are permitted to manifest in the exhibition at the Agricultural Hall.

To a very large proportion of our readers Covent-garden Market is the most attractive of any in London, and it must be allowed that it is always interesting, and its lessons are of value to gardeners. But this market loses rapidly in the estimation of observers who have travelled, when it is regarded as the principal fruit and vegetable market of this great metropolis. It is a wretched apology for a market, though but lately improved by the provision of a glass roof to protect the traders in potatoes. It has grown beyond its capacity, and if it cannot be expanded in a respectable way, it ought to be abolished. Whoso doubts the justice of this condemnation may be desired to perambulate the market at an early hour any day next week. The result of the perambulation should be the sending of subscriptions to hospitals for consumption, seeing that a considerable part of the early trade of Covent-garden Market is conducted in a manner that must be directly destructive to the health of all concerned in it.

In the selection of a market for the entertainment of one making holiday in London, Leadenhall should have first consideration. It is old, ugly, picturesque, inconvenient, dark, and, perhaps, in some respects dangerous. But it is intensely interesting. In many respects it is like a market or fair in the far East, and it happens, with great propriety, to be situated in the extreme east of London. For its antiquity, tumbledown ugliness, and splendid variety of country produce, alive and dead, Leadenhall Market is one of the most delightful places for occasional resort in all London, and there has been suddenly created a reason why such as know it not should become acquainted with it, while those who know it well should have another (for it may be the last) look round.

The market, as we know it, is to be abolished, and a new market will be constructed on the site. It is not for me to complain. The improvement is needed, and the Corporation, we may be sure, will carry it out in a spirited and intelligent manner. But while I applaud the determination, I must be permitted to shed a tear somewhere in the narrow ways of the little bustling place; for I call to mind the Eastern story of the sage who cried, "The days of my youth, where are they?" and Echo answered, "Where are they?" Only my case is different. I cry, "The days of my youth, where are they?" and Echo answers, "In Leadenhall Market!" An Irish echo might have answered, "Wherever you like, y'r honour;" but my echo is eastern, and somewhat north-eastern, therefore simple-minded, and, at this time of year, bewildered with a combination of Scandinavian and Oriental fancies.

Leadenhall Market was founded by the great Sir Richard Whittington. That is a fact. But he was not only the founder, as he might have been for his own advantage—and perhaps the first to substitute cats for rabbits as in a certain way he certainly did—but he gave the market to the Corporation in the year 1408, which makes it 470 years old, and suggests that it ought to be left alone thirty years, so as

to connect its rejuvenation with the cincentenary (read cinq if you like) of Sir Richard Whittington's capability of paying more than twenty shillings in the pound. There was soon after added a granary, and thenceforth the market grew; but the town grew faster, knowing no bounds; and now the market is as a pin's head to the elephant it ought to be.

There were then two markets hard by—Eastcheap, which retains its name to this hour, and Westcheap, which we know as Cheapside, and weave into our fireside gabble without any proper suspicion of the enormous picturesqueness of the compound name. Dear me! Edmund Kean was not the only man who talked poetry without knowing it. We are all guilty of a similar folly; and the reader of Master Gerard will call to mind that the bloom and breath of the country came daily into the heart of Cheapside, and made the City a sort of sunny side to the farm and the garden, which we can scarcely consider it now.

Perhaps this note may persuade some of our readers to have a peep at Leadenhall Market for the first time. They will discover that it is a kind of universe reduced to the proportion of the wants of ordinary humanity. It is a mart for the sale of beef, mutton, poultry, game, and fish; for the sale of living dogs, peacocks, geese, ducks, cocks and hens, guinea-pigs, dormice, and squirrels. If you wanted a park of deer, a herd of Brittany black cows, a yard of Cochin fowls, or a school of kangaroos, or fifty to a hundred English foxes, you might in five minutes arrange with Mr. Baker to meet the case for a sufficient consideration.

Did you want a nice ickle ugly pig now—there he is, plump as butter, and as ugly as a young angel fallen; or a tip-top Charles's spaniel?—look there, what a beauty! and please don't ask me if I think he has been stolen, because I see no evidence in his looks that he has ever gone wrong, and this is such a respectable market that I should expect thirteenspence and a Leadenhall token in change for a shilling. Do you want a peacock, or a pair of swans, or a live bittern, or a company of two storks, or four herons, or a real live badger to bait, or a couple of otters that look like coolers, or a splendid crowing specimen of the great bustard, which the naturalists say is "extinct"—behold, here you are, and the only bar to the gulp of the honey is the horrible question of so much money. But don't be alarmed on that score, for Leadenhall prices are as reasonable as any in the world; in fact, they are market prices, and that is a hit as a matter of wit.

I remember well—to forget is impossible—that I once bought a grand golden eagle, as lively as a lark and as strong as Samson, in this very market, for the quite nominal sum of five pounds sterling. That he at dawn next day broke out of his cage and mangled a piece of beef that originally weighed twenty pounds, and killed a parrot that went free through the house at a value of fifty pounds, is no discredit to the market—rather the other way; it proved the eagle to be a reality, and if there was any blame to be cast, let it be on the man who bought it—which is me.—ALPHABETAGAMMA, in the *Gardener's Magazine*.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER X.—"I LOVE HER."

IT was the first taste of the excitement of war, and when the skirmish was at an end, and the body of white robed sowers put to flight, the men formed into little groups among the tents, while the buzz of eager conversation filled the air.

There were some half-dozen wounded, but no one fatally, and the mess-tent that day was as full of laughter and joking as usual, in spite of the slight diminution in number of those that sat down to the table.

Sergeant Davis had received a cut, which, though slight, would necessitate his being carried in a dooly in the rear during the next march, with his fellow-sufferers. He did not seem to mind much, however, but bore the pain without any murmuring, save an occasional growl to himself, and lay watching his wife as she flitted about waiting on him, and looking prettier than ever.

"Come, Mrs. Davis, be fair," said Parker, the man who had fallen from sunstroke when forming one of the little party that went out in search of her in the heat of the day. "Don't give all your attention to him. I am dying of thirst, and I'm sure you've given him more to drink than will do him any good."

"Poor lad!" said Mary, in a pitying tone. "I ought to set up for a nurse, I think. It seems I should have plenty to do."

"Well, it's too bad to put us poor fellows, who haven't any wives, in the same tent with those who have, when we're wounded or sick."

"Shouldn't come out to Indy if you can't stand a little sun," growled the sergeant.

"Did you speak, Davis?"

"No; I didn't."

"Oh, Dick, what a story," said his little wife, reprovingly. "Listen, what is that?"

There was perfect stillness in the tent as she held up her hand, but nothing was to be heard save the usual noises of the camp, and after a minute the sergeant spoke.

"What did you think you heard, Polly?"

"I am sure there was a sound of guns firing in the distance. It must be a long way off; but I am sure it was that."

"It may be. Chutnegunj is not so very far away, as the colonel hopes to reach it to-morrow or the next day. There must be fighting going on there."

The same sound had greeted the ears of Dora Vaughan and Mabel Stafford as they took their way towards the major's quarters with the intention of cheering up Mrs. Harland, whose maid had told them that that strong-minded lady was in a half-fainting condition from fright.

Both girls turned pale as the distant "boom" reached them.

"Guns, Mabel! How dreadful it is! I never thought I should so soon be in the very midst of such horrors. It seems but yesterday that I was standing on the deck, looking over the wide sea,

and picturing my arrival here. How different the reality is to my castles in the air!"

Her friend pressed her hand sympathisingly, but did not speak, as there was a pathetic hopelessness behind Dora's words which moved her deeply, and she felt herself, however innocently, to be the destroyer of the poor girl's illusions.

As they drew nearer to the major's tent, a low, stifled sobbing came from under the eaves, and they saw a native servant lying on his charpoy, covered with bandages and plaisters, and giving vent to an occasional moan, which was followed by a burst of sobs from his wife, who was seated by his side.

"Oh, Mabel, Mabel, what is this? What has happened to that poor man?"

"Hush, come away. We can do no good. I cannot bear to see it."

"Has he been wounded in the fight this morning, do you suppose?"

"No, no," said Mabel, trying to draw her away. "You will get used to such sights in time. It is no very unusual occurrence here."

Dora laid her hand on the woman's shoulder, in spite of Mabel's endeavours to prevent her.

"What is the matter?" she asked, gently. "Can I do anything for you?"

The sobs ceased, and a pair of wondering eyes were lifted for an instant to the fair, girlish face, and then fell again.

"Is this your husband?" asked Dora, as no reply came to her first questions.

"Yes, missee."

"Dora, what is the use of this? We are becoming quite a centre of attraction. See, here are several natives coming to see what is going on."

"Tell them to go, then. How was he hurt like this?" she said, addressing the woman again.

"His master beat him, missee," she sobbed. "He say he'll kill him next time."

"Hush, hush—don't cry. Who is his master?"

"Major Harland."

Dora stood mute with astonishment, and then turned to her friend.

"Is that true?"

Mabel inclined her head.

"Can a man in his position be such a—be so cruel? What had he done? For what was he punished?"

"He stayed away too long when his master wanted him, missee."

"Stay here a minute, Mabel;" and, keeping in the shadow, Dora hurried back to the tent they had quitted, to return at the end of a few moments with some cooling drink.

"This is for your husband," she said. "I wish there was anything else I could do."

The woman's grateful look showed that the kindness and sympathy had not been thrown away.

"It is strange," said Mabel, as the two girls moved towards the tent door; "but I could hardly have done that. I hate this practice of knocking the poor creatures about, but I could not touch them and talk to them as if they were of the same race as ourselves. I always feel as if their service and even their affection, or what they pretend to be affection, is compulsory. It seems to me that the blessings

with which they are so ready in return for so little would be curses if they dared utter them."

"I shall speak to Major Harland about it."

"You, Dora? Oh, no! What would be the good? There is no law to prevent him killing the man if he pleases."

At this moment they entered the tent, to find Mrs. Harland lying on a bed, with her eyes closed, and her maid Anna busily fanning her.

"Did you hear those guns?" she said, faintly, half opening her eyes for an instant to let them rest on the two girls. "But sit down before you answer. It makes me hot to look at you standing there."

"Are not you hot and tired, Anna?" asked Dora, as they obeyed, and she offered to take the hand-punkah; "give me that while you have a little rest."

"No, thank you, Miss Dora. I am not hot," said the maid, her sullen, vacant expression giving place to a smile, as she looked up from her occupation.

"How absurd you are, child," said the major's wife, in a scarcely audible voice. "Native servants are never hot or tired. They are used to the climate. Don't put such ideas into her head."

"Of course, they can hear more than we Europeans," said Mabel.

"Mrs. Harland," said Dora, entreatingly, "I have a favour to ask you. Do persuade the major to punish his servants less severely for their faults. There is one outside who lies groaning with pain, and his wife's sobs went to my heart."

"He deserved it, my dear child. When you are married, and have ever so many servants of your own, you will find out that a thorough beating does them good. Silly child, why you look quite pale, and there are actually tears in your eyes. What a fuss about nothing."

"Listen, there are the guns again!" exclaimed Mabel, to divert the elder lady's attention from Dora.

A distant rumble was plainly heard, and the major's wife gave a gasp and shudder that made the two girls start in the expectation of seeing her faint away. However, she soon reassured them on that point.

"I wish I had not come out," she said, in an ill-used tone. "If we had stayed at Bagra, as I wished, we should have been out of the way of all this."

In the meantime, Dora was the subject of conversation in another part of the camp.

Dr. Miller had but just left Ensign Payne, after examining and attending to his wound; when Morley entered the tent where the young man lay, looking pale and excited.

"The very man I wanted to see," said Payne. "Sit down here, Frank. Heigho, my boy, I am so sick of lying here."

"You haven't been lying here long yet, at all events."

"No, but Miller says I musn't want to get up for a week. However, I know he always says twice as long as he means, because one is sure to get up before he gives leave."

"Well, what did you want me for? I thought you had something to ask me?"

Payne coloured and hesitated.

"Fire away," said Morley, looking at him curiously.

There was a pause, during which the faint "boom" came again on the breeze which penetrated into the tent.

"I want to know whether you are engaged to Miss Vaughan?"

Morley started, then frowned, and bit his moustache.

"What is that to you?" he said, sharply.

"Answer me first, and I will tell you."

"Suppose I decline to answer?"

"Why should you?" said Payne, eagerly. "It shall go no further, if you wish it, but I must know."

"Must!" exclaimed the other, with a quick, penetrating glance, which seemed to throw a new light on him. He looked at Payne intently for a minute, and then let his eyes fall to the ground, remaining absorbed in thought.

"Are you engaged to her, Morley?"

The other did not answer, for so earnestly was he revolving something in his mind that the question was unheard. At last he looked up.

"I was, but she has broken it off."

Payne, who had raised himself on his elbow, fell back on his pillow, with a deep sigh of relief.

"And now tell me why you wished to know?"

"Because I love her," said Payne, simply.

"I thought that was coming. You sentimental boy, you have only seen her once."

The ensign was silent.

"May I ask," continued Morley, "how many times you have fallen in love at first sight before this?"

"Certainly, if you like; but I shall not tell you."

"How old are you, Harry?"

"Chaff away; it amuses you and doesn't hurt me, as the big man said when his little wife beat him."

Morley laughed, but the next minute he laid his hand on Payne's.

"Seriously, my dear boy, do you mean this?"

"Mean it? Frank, do I really look such a boy as the fellows make out?"

"You have shown yourself to be a man," said Morley, touching the ensign's wound. "There, Harry, I laughed at you about it, but if you are in earnest, with all my heart I hope you may win her. Go in and prosper."

"Thank you. But I say, Morley, I can't understand about you. I could have sworn she liked you."

"That shows how well you can read woman's looks," said Morley, trying to speak lightly.

"Miller's been at me this morning, trying to get out of me why you and Vaughan had quarrelled. He's an awfully inquisitive old chap. I told him there were reasons—very important reasons—that prevented my telling him all about it. In fact, I said I really felt that I could not in honour tell him. I don't think he has a suspicion that I knew nothing myself. I won't ask any questions, but I should like to know one thing. Is it his fault, or yours, that you are not friends?"

"His," said Morley, after a moment's hesitation. "And now, Harry, you will do us both a favour by letting this matter rest. It concerns only him and

me, and I could almost hope we may soon be called upon to give all our minds to our own defence, and the protection of those in our charge, for then the chattering and gossips of the regiment will perhaps leave our names alone. I don't include you among them, Payne, so you need not look affronted. You mean well, I know, but for the future let us go our own ways."

"It is a pity," said the young ensign, with a sigh. "You are both such good fellows, that I don't like to see you look daggers at each other, especially when you used to be so thick. But, as you say, it's no business of mine, and I'll not trouble any more about it."

CHAPTER XI.—"WE CANNOT LEAVE THE FORT."

TENTS were struck soon after one that night, and the march resumed, the men all in good spirits at the thought that the following morning they would reach Chutnegunj, and the long, dreary night marches would be over at least for a time.

It was still dark, save for the faint glimmering of the stars, when far ahead of the little column the clouds became tinged with a blood-red glow, which increased in extent each minute, and as the regiment drew nearer, flames were discernible shooting upwards, dyeing the wreaths of smoke that curled skyward of a fiery crimson.

There was soon no doubt as to the cause of this unusual sight. A native village was on fire, and as no attempt was made to stop the progress of the flames, they spread from one to another of the light wooden huts, so that it was very evident not one would be left.

The colonel was at first somewhat at a loss to determine the occasion of this, but he learned afterwards that the place, having been evacuated by the inhabitants, had been fired by orders of a native chief commanding a regiment of mutineers, that it might not be occupied and fortified by the English.

The sun was high and hot when the white domes and spires of the fort of Chutnegunj became visible, and tired, covered with dust, and exhausted by the heat, the men filed in through the gate, without enough spirit left to make even an attempt at presenting a military appearance.

Several scaling ladders lying about, and vultures soaring above, told that the place had been attacked already, but unsuccessfully, for the European sentries were to be seen on the walls, their bayonets glittering in the sun.

Already the kelassies had put up most of the tents in the courtyard, for they, with their baggage, had been sent on first, as usual. The mess-tent emitted an inviting clatter of plates, and an odour of breakfast. The last of the doolies containing the sick and wounded was passing the gate, when an exclamation from some one was followed by a talking and confusion, and running to and fro, which made Vaughan, who was in advance, hurry to the rear, and demand what was the matter.

The palkees containing his sister and Mabel Stafford were missing!

Vaughan staggered back under this double blow, and seemed about to fall, but he recovered himself directly.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could speak; "there is some mistake. They must be here somewhere." He dashed in among the various conveyances, making inquiries of the different bearers; but, however unwillingly, he could not fail to be quickly convinced that the two girls were not there, and no one remembered to have seen them since daylight.

As he extricated himself from the crowd, Morley came up to him, looking pale, but firm and collected.

"Here, Vaughan," he said, laying his hand on the other's arm, "come into my tent, and let's think what is to be done. We must talk it over calmly, or we can do nothing."

Forgetting at the moment, in this great misfortune, even the difference that existed between them, Vaughan followed him, and, as soon as they were out of sight of the curious eyes fixed upon them, sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

Morley glanced at him with a strange expression that had nothing in it either of affection or dislike, and then poured out some brandy from a bottle that stood on the table, and diluted it slightly.

"Drink this," he said, in the quick, imperative tone so familiar to the men of his company, and Vaughan mechanically obeyed.

"That's better. Now look here, Rob," he said, using the old familiar word unwittingly, "the colonel is half mad about this, for I came from him to you. There is no use expecting anything from a man when he loses his head like Stafford directly anything goes wrong. So it falls to you and me to think out what has become of those two poor girls, and to devise some means of rescuing them. Vaughan, we must put all other considerations aside for the present, and work together. Do you agree?"

Vaughan, who had recovered command over himself, and was attending eagerly to his companion's words, nodded.

"You have been very speedy in arriving at these conclusions," he said. "But of course it does not fall so heavily on you as on me."

The other frowned, and seemed about to speak angrily, but he restrained himself and went on—

"That is not to the point. The garrison here is very small, as I understand, and the place has been attacked several times by mutinous regiments. Therefore all our men are wanted here to assist in the defence. That puts an end to any idea we might have of going out with a party to look for them. Then what are we to do? Can you suggest anything?"

"It seems to me," said Vaughan, "that the first thing to be done is to see the colonel. If I cannot have a party to go out in search of them, why, I must go alone. It would send me mad to stay here and do nothing."

"In any case you will not go alone, for I shall be with you. Come, then, to get Stafford's permission. He will not refuse it under the circumstances."

They found the major and the other officers already with the colonel, who was walking up and down with hurried uneven steps. He stopped as

they came in, and held out his hand to Vaughan, who wrung it silently.

"By George, sir," burst out the major's deep tones, "this is a great fuss about nothing at all. It's plain enough that the coolies with those two palkees hung behind and missed us in the dark. No one will meddle with them, and they will be at the gate in an hour or two."

"Harland," said the colonel, who looked years older than the night before, "if, as you suggest, they only missed us in the dark, they have not the remotest chance of rejoining us, for the country is scoured in every direction by the enemy's sowars. They would be seen at once, and—"

He broke off, and drew a deep breath.

"Colonel," said Vaughan, "Morley and I want your permission to head a detachment in search of them."

"Not a man can be spared," groaned the colonel, "or I should not hesitate an instant."

"Then," said Morley, "Vaughan and I will pick out one or two trusty fellows, and go in a little party of four or so. You say that not a man can be spared, but two or three would never be missed."

"It would be madness, sheer madness, my dear boy; and the very proposition shows me what a couple of brave fellows I should lose. You would be cut to pieces in an instant."

"You refuse, colonel?"

"I do. If there were but the faintest chance of your doing any good, you should go; but as it is, you must give it up."

"But your own daughter," said Morley, in a low voice.

Colonel Stafford turned on him fiercely.

"Be silent, Morley. Will it make it easier to bear losing my daughter, to lose my son too?"

He laid his hand on Vaughan's shoulder as he spoke, and Morley turned away grinding his teeth.

"What, then, do you propose?" asked Vaughan.

"You cannot mean to leave matters as they are."

"We must pick out two or three of the natives who are worthy of confidence, and send them out as spies. When they have ascertained where the poor girls have been taken, a party must be spared to fetch them. But that will only be a case of a few hours, whereas if they are sent out now, without an idea where to go, who knows when they would return?"

The eyes of the young men met, and each read that the other would not be content with this.

"I cannot accept your decision, colonel," said Vaughan, with more agitation than he had yet shown. "Consider again, for Heaven's sake. I should go mad if I had to wait, trusting to any of these scoundrelly natives. I have not a grain of faith in any one of them."

"Let them go, Stafford," said Dr. Miller, who had entered to hear the latter part of the discussion. "You never know what a couple of young fellows, with plenty of pluck, can do."

The colonel stood a minute in indecision.

"Go, then," he said, slowly and reluctantly. "But choose two good men to go with you, and don't be any more rash than you can help."

"Thanks, colonel," said Vaughan, with a grateful

pressure of the hand, and the next minute the two young men were striding away from the tent.

"It's my belief," said Morley, "that that scoundrel—hallo, what do you want?"

"Did you call me, sahib?" said a native servant, with a large piece of sticking plaister on his forehead and one arm bandaged.

"Call? No, you know I did not," said the young officer, sharply; "be off!"

The man salaamed respectfully, and disappeared with great expedition.

"It was the major's servant," said Vaughan. "But what were you going to say?"

"I believe that scoundrel Jhod Rao has had something to do with this."

Vaughan shuddered, and his hands clenched involuntarily.

"It is only too probable, and that gives us a clue as to the direction to take—that is, the road back to Bagra. And now, who shall we take?"

"Humph. Who is there that would— By Jove, that reminds me. I had quite forgotten poor Payne. How upset he will be! I must go and speak to him before we go."

"Why should he? What has this to do with him?" asked Vaughan, in surprise.

Morley looked somewhat taken aback.

"I may as well be frank," he said, with a little hesitation. "He loves Dora."

"He! Pooh! Absurd! He has scarcely spoken to her."

"Come with me to see him. Oh, of course, he is in your tent. I had forgotten that. I wish he were all right, and could come with us."

They hurried to Vaughan's tent, to find the ensign up, and dressed.

"Well, who's going?" was his greeting.

"Going where?"

"You know where well enough. Have you got the colonel's leave to go and look for them?"

"Yes," said Vaughan. "None of the men can be spared, so Morley and I are going with a couple more—whichever we like."

"Me, of course, for one."

"My dear fellow, you ought to be in bed now. You look ghastly, and even supposing any one could entertain such an absurd proposition for an instant, you would break down before we reached the gate."

"Morley, speak up for me," said Payne, imploringly. "I must go. I should die right off, if you went without me. I am all right enough."

He started to walk across the floor, but reeled, and would have fallen, but for Morley's outstretched arm.

Dropping into a chair, he placed his elbows on the table, and leaned his head on his hands, with fingers clutching his hair in a manner that, under any other circumstances, might have provoked a smile.

"Come," said Vaughan, laying his hand on the ensign's shoulders, which heaved with an emotion he endeavoured to conceal; "be a man. I cannot tell why you should care so much, Harry. You see now that you are not fit for it."

"Never mind me," said Payne, in a stifled voice. "Go and lose no time, or you don't know what may happen. Every minute may be of value."

"Morley," said Vaughan, "I have been thinking whom to take with us. What do you say to Corporal McAndrew for one? He is a quiet, shrewd, cautious fellow, and may be more useful than any one with more dash and go in him."

"He'll do, if we can get him," was the ready response; "but what does this man want?"

He approached the tent door, at which stood a white-robed native, who salaamed and replied to Morley's interrogation.

"I am Joom, Miss Dora's servant. Sahib Captain Morley is going to find the mem sahibs?"

"Yes. Have you anything to tell us as to where they are?"

"No, sahib. I came to say, let me come. Take me with the sahibs."

"What for? Why do you wish to go?"

"Missee always good to me," said the man, quietly, and standing firm under the piercing scrutiny of Morley's dark eyes.

"Do you hear this, Vaughan?"

"Yes."

"What do you say to it?"

"Let us take him. He is the man who stood by Dora before; and, I believe, if any one with a dark skin is worthy of confidence, he is."

"Well, look here, Joom. If we take you, will you stand by us through thick and thin, or will you go and betray us into the hands of the sepoys?"

"The sahibs shall see," said the Mohammedan, calmly.

"I think we'll risk it, Rob?"

Vaughan nodded.

"I go to get what things I want, and to see after McAndrew. Then I shall come back here for you."

He disappeared in company with their new ally, and Vaughan proceeded to examine his rifle and pistols.

"Oh, I say," said Payne, looking up after a few minutes. "I would give anything to be able to go with you, old fellow. It seems so hard that he who doesn't care a straw for her should go and save her and earn her eternal gratitude, while I am tied here, and can do nothing."

"Her? Of whom are you speaking?" asked Vaughan, calmly.

"Of Miss Vaughan, your sister."

"Let me give you a piece of advice, Payne. Don't get any nonsense into your head with regard to my sister, because I don't think it in the least probable that she will return anything of the sort. You needn't look so hurt. I only say it out of a wish to spare you future pain."

"Thank you," said Payne, in a firmer and more manly tone than was usual with him, "but it is too late to tell me that. I mean to use every effort that man can make, to win her for my wife. If I fail—why, I must bear it as well as I can; if I succeed—ah! Vaughan, I know I seem young and boyish, but she will never find any one to care for her better than I should."

"Harry," said Vaughan, sadly, "I have listened to almost those same words before, and in reference to my sister, the man who uttered them seeming as earnest as you do now; and I believed him. All

was forgotten for a fresher face. How can I know that you would be different? There, here comes Morley with McAndrew. I'm off."

"Heaven grant that you may soon find them. Tell her I should have been with you but for this."

"All right. Ta-ta. Why, Morley, what new misfortune makes you look like this?"

"A very great one," said Morley, in a low, deep tone. "The gate is invested by a large number of sowars, so that we cannot leave the fort."

The Octopus of the Hamlet.

WE extract the following vivid picture of country life from the *Standard*:—"Beware that you do not knock your head against the smoke-blackened beams of the low ceiling, and do not put your elbow carelessly on the deal table, stained with spilled ale, left uncleaned from last night, together with little heaps of ashes, tapped out from pipes, and spots of grease from the tallow candles. The old-fashioned settles which gave so cosy an air in the olden time to the inn room, and which still linger in some of the houses, are not here—merely forms and cheap chairs. A great pot hangs over the fire, for the family cooking is done in the public apartment; but do not ask to join in the meal, for though the food may be more savoury than is dreamed of in your philosophy, the two-grained forks have not been cleaned this many a day, and every one naturally thrusts the tip of his knife fresh from his greasy mouth into the salt-cellar, the horn salt spoon originally in use having long disappeared. Neither is the butcher's wooden skewer, just extracted from the meat, an elegant toothpick if you are fastidious.

"But these things are trifles when the dish is a plump pheasant, jugged hare, brown partridges, or trout—perhaps not exactly in season—as the chance may be; or a couple of boiled fowls, or a turkey, or some similar toothsome morsel. Perhaps it is the gamey taste thus induced that enables them to enjoy joints from the butcher which are downright tainted; for it is characteristic of the place and people on the one hand to dine on the very best, as above, and yet to higgie over a halfpenny a pound at the shop.

"Nowhere else in all the parish, from the polished mahogany at the squire's mansion to the ancient solid oaken table at the substantial old-fashioned farmer's, can there be found such a constant supply of food usually considered as almost the privilege of the rich. Bacon, it is true, they eat of the coarsest kind; but with it eggs, new and delicious. In brief, it is the strangest hodge-podge of pheasant and bread and cheese, asparagus and cabbage. But somehow, whatever is good, whatever is held in estimation, makes its appearance in that grimy little back room on that ragged, dirty table-cloth.

"Who pays for these things? Are they paid for at all? There is no licensed dealer in game in the village, nor within many miles, and it is passing strange. But there are other things almost as curious. The wood pile in the back yard is ever high and bulky; let the fire burn never so clear in the frosty days, there is always a regular supply of firewood. It is the same with coal. Yet there is

no copse attached to the place, nor is the landlord ever seen chopping for himself, nor are the farmers in the habit of receiving large orders for logs and faggots. By the power of some magic spell all things drift hitherward. A magnet which will draw logs of timber and faggots half across the parish, which will pull pheasants off their perch, extract trout from the deep, and stay the swift hare in midst of her career, is a power indeed to be envied. Had any enchanter of mediæval days so potent a charm?

"Perhaps it is the engaging and attractive character of the landlord himself. He is a tall, lanky man, usually seen in slippers, and trousers too short for his limbs; he 'sloppets' about in his waistcoat and shirt-sleeves, hands in pockets, and shoulders forward, almost in a hump. His chin is stubbly, and one eye has a watery weakness, a constant rheum, clouding its vision. He hangs about the place, now bringing in a log, now carrying a bucket, now spinning a mop, now slouching down the garden to feed the numerous fowls that scratch around the stumps of cabbages. Anything, in short, but work. Sometimes, however, he takes the trap and horse, and is supposed to be gone on a dealing expedition. Sometimes it is only to carry a jar of beer up to the men in the field, and to mouch a good armful of fresh-cut clover for provender from the swathe. He sips gin the livelong day—weak gin always—every hour from morn till a cruel Legislature compels the closing of the shutters.

"He is never intoxicated—it is simply a habit, a sort of fuel to feed the low cunning in which his soul delights. So far from intoxication is he, that there is a fable of some hard knocks and ill usage, and even of a thick head being beaten against the harder stones of a court-yard behind, when the said thick head was helpless from much ale. Such matters are hushed up in the dark places of the earth. So far from intoxication is he, that he has the keenest eye to business.

"There is a lone rick-yard up in the fields yonder, to which the carters come from the farm far away to fetch hay, and straw, and so forth. They halt at the public, and are noticed to enjoy good living there; nor are they asked for their score. A few trusses of hay, or bundles of straw, a bushel of corn, or some such trifle is left behind merely out of good fellowship. Waggoners come up laden with tons of coal for the farms miles above, far from a railway station; three or four teams, perhaps, one after the other. Just a knob or two can scarcely be missed, and a little of the small in a sack bag.

"The bundles of wood thrown down at the door by the labourers as they enter are rarely picked up again. They disappear, and the hearth at home is cold. The foxes are blamed for the geese and the chickens, and the hunt execrated for not killing enough of the cubs; but Reynard is not always guilty. Eggs and poultry vanish. The shepherds have ample opportunities of disposing of a few spare lambs to a general dealer whose trap is handy.

"Certainly, continuous gin does not chill the faculties. If a can of ale is left in the outhouse at the back, and happens to be found by a few choice spirits at the hour when the vicar is just commencing

his sermon in church on Sunday, it is by the purest accident. The turnip and swede greens left at the door, picked wholesale from the farmer's fields; the potatoes produced from coat pockets by fingers which have been sorting heaps at the farmstead; the apples which would have been crushed under foot if the labourers had not considerably picked them up—all these, and scores of other matters scarce worth naming, find their way over that threshold.

"Perhaps the man is genial, his manners enticing, his stories amusing, his jokes witty. Not at all. He is a silent fellow, scarce opening his mouth except to curse the poor scrub of a maid servant, or to abuse a man who has not paid his score. He slinks in and lights his pipe, smokes it silently, and slinks out again. But the watery eye, the vision clouded with constant rheum, is ever on the watch. He is the octopus of the hamlet, fastening on the cottage homes and sucking the life-blood from them. He misses nothing, and nothing comes amiss to him.

"His wife, perhaps, then, may be the centre of attraction? She is a short, stout woman, whose cheeks as she walks wobble with fat; whose face is ever dirty, and dress (at home) slatternly. But mayhap her heart is in the right place, and when Hodge is missed from his accustomed seat by the fire of an evening, when it is bruited abroad that he is down with illness, hurriedly slips on her bonnet, and, saying nothing, carries a basket of good things to cheer the inner man? Or, when his wife is confined, perhaps she brings some little delicacies—a breast of pheasant, a bottle of port wine—and strengthens her with motherly counsel in the hour of her travail. Is this so? Hodge's wife could tell you that the cottage door has never been darkened by her presence; that she, indeed, would not acknowledge her if passed by chance on the road. For the landlady sails forth to the adjacent town in all the glory of those fine feathers that proverbially make the fine bird.

"It is a goodly spectacle to see her in rustling, ample silk, in costly sealskin, in a bonnet 'loud' but rich, shading a countenance that glows ruddy red as a furnace. A gold chain encircles her portly neck, with a gold watch thereto attached; gold rings upon her fingers, in one of which sparkles a brilliant diamond; gold earrings, gold brooch, kid gloves, bursting from the fatness of the fingers they encase. The dingy trap and limping raw-boned hack which carry her to the outskirts of the town scarcely harmonize with so much glory. But at the outskirts she alights, and enters the street in full dignity. By some potent alchemy the sweat of Hodge's brow has become condensed into that sparkling diamond, which is disclosed when the kid is drawn off in the shops, to the admiration of all beholders.

"Or, if not the wife, perhaps it may be the daughter who is the magnet that draws the very timber across the parish? She is not ill-looking, and might pass muster in her best dress, were it not for a squareness of build, like the set of a man rather than the full curves associated with woman. She is rarely seen in the house at all, and neither talks to the men or the women who enter. She sallies forth at night, and her friends are the scampish

among the sons of the lower class of tenant farmers. A daughter of the night, let darkness cover her ways.

"This is the family. How strange and yet how undeniable is it that such a house should attract the men whose self-interest, one would imagine, would lead them to shun it, and if they must spend their hard-won earnings, at least to get a good article for their money. It proves that an appeal to reason is not always the way to manage the working man. Such a low house is always a nest of agitation; there the idle, drunken, and ill-conditioned have their rendezvous; there evil is hatched; and from there men take their first step on the road that leads to the gaol.

"The place is often crowded at night—there is scarcely room to sit or stand, the atmosphere is thick with smoke, and a hoarse roar of jarring voices fills it, above which rises the stave of a song shouted in one unvarying key from some corner. Money pours in apace—the draughts are deep, and long, and frequent, the mugs are large, the thirst insatiate. The takings, compared with the size and situation of the house, must be high; and yet, with all this custom and profit, the landlord and his family still grovel. And grovel they will, in dirt, vice, low cunning, and iniquity—as the serpent went on his belly—to the end of their days."

Christmas Greenery.

MR. FRANCIS GEORGE HEATH, whose pen has so graphically written of our ferns and forest trees, is the very man to discourse upon the above subject, and he does so as follows:—

Though the state of the thermometer in the early days of December not unfrequently precludes, in this country, the possibility of a "green Christmas," the idea of a Christmas without greenery is beyond the conception even of the poorest of our fellow-citizens. Responsive as plant-life ever is to the genial touch of soft, warm wind and gentle rain, no amount of elemental persuasiveness could call up from below ground, in the short period which intervenes between the commencement of December and Christmas, the greenness which nestles in snug darkness under the scaly covering of waterproof buds.

The fiat of the frost has gone forth, and has so deeply impressed its icy chill on the tender forms of deciduous vegetation that many weeks of "open" weather would be needed to call into action its dormant energies. A "green Christmas" must necessarily be preceded by autumnal rains and mildness, and by an extension of autumn over November and into the first three weeks of the Christmas month. But frost and snow and cold east winds may do their worst without depriving us of Christmas greenery, though its amount and quality will naturally be affected by the state of the weather during the period immediately preceding the great festive season of the year.

And by Christmas greenery we do not mean the thousand and one things that are made to grow at this season by the production of an artificial temperature. By a covering of glass and by an extemporizing of heat any plant may be coaxed into active

life, and made to feel the influence as of a second spring. How wonderful, and how beautiful, indeed, are the mid-winter productions of the conservatory! How delightful, amidst the general air of cheerlessness which makes even our out-of-door gardens dismal in the season of cold rains, of chilling hoar frost, and of driving hail, to feast the eyes on the greenness, the freshness, the beauty furnished forth from our winter glass gardens! There we may have sweet scents as of spring, and the charm of colour—white and gold, and scarlet, and purple. One might look on some fine winter morning into the depths of a London florist's window and imagine—when the back is turned on the busy traffic of the street—that the time was early spring, but for the frosty "nip" of the air and the cutting draught which makes even the well-clad shiver.

But these blossoms of mid-winter, nursed in the gentle warmth of the greenhouse, soon hang their beautiful heads when brought beyond the limits of their abnormal atmosphere. Alien to the wintry air of the streets, they can only survive under the protection afforded by the warmth and shelter provided for them in the dwelling-room. And they are for the rich alone—or at least for the well-to-do—not for the poor. To produce them involves an expenditure of money, and time, and trouble. They are, in short, luxuries, and unattainable to those who, even at the festive season, have to struggle hard to keep body and soul together with the necessities of life.

It is of the natural greenery that we would speak—the greenery which can be obtained by rich and poor alike—and that, by the wise provision of the beneficent Creator, preserves its greenness, and freshness, and beauty in the open and frosty air of our English gardens, or in the bleak region of our English winter woodlands. And if we name half a dozen of our evergreens, we shall have compassed the chief amongst our trees and shrubs which furnish us with natural Christmas greenery. Need we explain that we mean the Holly and the Mistletoe, the Box and the Fir, the Laurel and the Ivy? Their names, indeed, are household words. Their presence is indicative of the brightness and joyousness of the festive season. Would that the brightness and joy might always—for the poorest—last so long as the sparkle of the Holly and the vivid greenness of the Box and the Ivy!

Perhaps the unreflecting man, not less than the selfish man, has never fully realized, has never attempted to realize, the vast amount of pleasure—real genuine pleasure of the purest kind—that is distributed at Christmas time amongst the home circles of our island by means of the hardy evergreens we have enumerated above. Already, in anticipation of the popular demand for "a bit of green" wherewith to invest English homes with the external—that is to say, with the decorative, associative, and commemorative—character of an English Christmas, a heavy contribution has been laid upon our evergreen trees and shrubs. A stream of hardy greenery is beginning to move in the direction of our cities, towns, and villages.

As yet, however, and whilst we are penning this article, the stream is but sluggish. But it will soon

become quickened. A day or two more and the annual wholesale lopping of greenery will begin. And the biggest of all the streams will find its way to the metropolis. Woodland and hedgerow, hill-side, glen, park, and garden will contribute to the required supply, which will be furnished, even from Scotland and other distant parts of the kingdom. During the few days immediately preceding Christmas, those who might be inclined to rise from their beds an hour or two before the dawn might witness a curious and instructive sight in the enclosures of the big market of Covent Garden, or of the smaller Farringdon, Borough, and Spitalfields Markets.

The host of poor people who obtain a hardly-earned livelihood by retailing the products of the country amongst the population of London—splitting into divisions—have been assembling in the market areas we have named, to bargain for and purchase the decorative greenery of the approaching season, brought from north, east, south, and west, by railway and cart, in huge crates and bundles, ready for the inevitable demand. Side by side in the crowd of middlemen clamouring for the supply wherewith to meet the requirements of their customers, will be found the well-to-do greengrocer who keeps a shop, and the poor "coster" whose business counter is only the familiar barrow.

A curious sight, too, is presented by the material which will be found heaped up in the London green-markets, in the hours immediately preceding daylight, ready for the inevitable pre-Christmas purchase and distribution. Of all our evergreens thus gathered in from various parts of the country, it will be found that the greatest contribution has been furnished by the Spruce, Fir and the Holly; the former for "Christmas Trees," the latter, for general purposes of decoration, will be used largely, not so much perhaps on account of association as because of its intrinsic beauty, its wealth of ruby fruit contrasting with the rich green of its glossy leaves.

The Mistletoe claims, perhaps, more regard on account of association, bringing, as it does, to mind the weird mysteries of the Druidical priests of ancient Britain. It is invested with interest, too, by reason of the curious manner of its growth as a parasite of the oak and of the apple tree, and not less by association with the custom that endears it to the hearts of lovers. The Ivy claims next to come into notice on account of its beauty, both of form and colouring, and of its graceful utility for wreathing and festooning.

We must not forget the Box, with its sturdy wealth of clustering leaves, and its lighter hue of shining green; and lastly, the broad leaves of Laurel give, by their verdant largeness, the opportunity for decorative contrasts, as well with the smaller-foliaged twigs of holly and mistletoe as with the clustering boughs of box and the trailing sprays of ivy.

"The Christmas Tree," furnished chiefly by young specimens of the spruce fir, has, however, amongst all our Christmas greenery the greatest charm for our vast population of little ones. Its greenness is so persistent that, whether rooted or not, it will keep fresh during many days of Christmastide: whilst it can be obtained of any size, and at a price that will accommodate itself to the means of

all classes. What a world of pleasure does this dwarf tree provide for little people—the pleasure of preparation and anticipation, no less than the actual pleasure derived at the Christmas season, when the time arrives for the distribution of the mimic wealth which has been crowded upon every one of its available branches! And, looking for a moment at the more practical side of the subject, what an extensive and innocent industry is promoted by the annual demand for the trinkets wherewith to decorate that which is the child's ideal of a merry Christmas!

Those who have an eye for Christmas greenery, and hearts that can appreciate the sentimental side of human nature, would find much to interest them in a walk through our crowded London streets on Christmas Eve. Brilliantly-lighted shops, and the strongly-illuminated stalls and barrows of the street sellers, stored, each in its particular way, with the wealth of good things that are to minister to the material enjoyments of the season, would lose the especial charm of their display if it were not for the added attraction which sentiment throws in in the shape of the sprays of greenery deftly introduced here and there amongst the mass. And this same sentiment, also, powerfully affects the minds of the buyers, as we should see if, like *Le Diable Boiteux* of Le Sage, we could uncover the roofs of City homes, and peep in upon their festive gatherings on Christmas evening.

It would make the heart glad to see the store of happiness compressed—even in the houses of the poor—into that brief season of enjoyment. But our pleasure would be intensified by the pervading evidence that, beyond and above the merely sensuous features of the scenes revealed to us, full regard had been paid to the softening, elevating, and refining influence of sentiment by the abounding presence of Christmas greenery.

Winter Furs.

LAST winter was not such a season as gladdens the heart of the fur dealer, but there are indications that the present one will be somewhat different. Still, ladies must have furs; and we devote a few lines to telling them what is the "correct thing." The sealskin still holds its position as favourite, notwithstanding the popularity of fur-lined wraps. This winter they are made more closely fitting to the figure, with an average length of about thirty-seven inches. The front should be double-breasted, and may lap from the throat down, or turn back at the top like the lappels of a coat. For fineness of fleece and depth of colour the Shetland sealskins are chosen; but these are very scarce, and very high, as no Shetland seals have been taken for several winters. The strong Alaska skins, with thick, warm pelt, are preferred for garments that are to be subjected to hard service, as they are more durable.

Sealskins have at length become the popular fur in Paris, and consequently the greater demand for them has increased the prices in London. The prices have not advanced here, though they probably will do so next winter. Untrimmed sacques cost from 50 dols. to 200 dols., but those of fashionable length

are never lower than 100 dols. Those sold at 125 dols. are especially commended, but the prices vary according to the quality of the skins and the depth of the garment. A border will add something to the expense. The fashionable borders are brown and silver beaver (which the French call *castor*), plucked and unplucked otter, wool seal, black marten or Alaska sable, coloured lynx, and Chinchilla.

Fur-lined cloaks are worn in a variety of shapes this season. In selecting garments the purchaser should keep in view the probability that full draperies will be revived, and select an ample garment. For this reason, many ladies are buying circulars instead of the newer shapes. Circulars are made with the deep Russian collar—hoods are out of date—and may be either bordered or plain; if the sum to be expended is limited, it is better to omit the border, and buy the best quality of silk and of fur for the cloak and its lining. Cheap linings of fur rub off on the dress beneath them, and the low-priced silks soon become "shiny." Repped silk of heavy quality, Sicilienne, armure, and a new fabric called *Messine*, are all used for the outside of the cloak.

The rich dark Russian sable sets are always valuable, and always in fashion, no matter what novelties are offered. The boas are round and long, with two tails finishing each end. Handsome dark sable muffs cost as high as 400 dols., but there are light shades of sable made up in muffs for 35 dols. Since the fashion favours all furs with white tips or silvery points, sables of this kind have been used, though formerly they were rejected. Muffs of this silver-tipped sable are lined with white silk, and made very dressy: they cost 85 dols. Of the Hudson Bay sable the boas with a dark stripe down the middle are handsomest, and can scarcely be distinguished from the medium qualities of Russian sable.

Seed Time.

HOW times are changed! Not so many years ago a catalogue was a something hardly known, as far as garden produce is concerned. Nowadays, our enterprising seed firms devote endless attention to this branch of their business. For instance, we have just received the handsome quarto issued by Messrs. Sutton and Sons, of Reading, and can only blend surprise with admiration at its excellence. We have here, most handsomely printed, some hundred and thirty large quarto pages, which combine a list of flowers and vegetables with abundant useful information, and, for the most part, beautifully illustrated. Messrs. Sutton call it their "Amateurs' Guide," and such it certainly is; for, not only are we given the common English name of a flower, its scientific title, and price, description, and growth, but also an illustration carefully drawn from nature by a clever artist. But when it comes to the question of illustrations, there are some excellent engravings of the kiosques and lawns of the Paris Exhibition, which were decorated with flowers, and made verdant by the Parisian agents of this firm; and, above all, twenty-six coloured illustrations of choice flowers, grown by Sutton and Sons, which are really artistic gems, and which should at the end of the season be

transferred to a favourite scrap-book. The first edition of this work is 60,000, and the price 1s. 3d., which represents the value of one plate. The firm now send every kind of vegetable and flower seed—excepting peas and beans—by post, carriage free, of course a great advantage to country residents. This, we understand, is a plan that they were the first to adopt. Every lover of a garden should send for this work, for nothing can be better than its calendar of the months, and hints on the cultivation of the various vegetables in use. In all cases common sense seems to be blended with perspicuity. Practical simplicity seems to have been the writer's aim.

American Grouse.

THE willow grouse bears a considerable resemblance to the red grouse of Scotland, and it is commonly called moor cock by the inhabitants of Newfoundland, many of whom are, of course, old country people, and thus familiar with the British bird; partridge is another and less appropriate name by which it is frequently known here. This species is the only ptarmigan that is ever hunted for sport, and this one only, as far as we know, in Newfoundland. The birds are usually found on the open barrens, where grow the plants and berries on which they especially delight to feed, and which give to their flesh in the early fall a peculiar excellence.

When found in such situations the sport must, we imagine, resemble pinnated grouse shooting on the prairies; certain it is that all who have tried it are enthusiastic on the subject, and speak and write as if there were nothing like ptarmigan shooting. Sometimes a late family are found by the dogs, the young of which are not yet able to fly, and in such a case it is most touching to see the efforts made by the old ones to draw their pursuers away from the brood. If these efforts fail the male will not hesitate to fly at dog or man in the most courageous manner.

Few sportsmen, we hope, would have the heart to destroy either parents or young under such circumstances. Both Cannister and Dale, who found this species abundant in Alaska, notice the strong attachment which the female has for her eggs and brood, and state that the affection of the male for the female is equally strong, for he remains with her during the period of incubation, and even refuses to leave her when in danger. The same explorers mention that these birds in winter form regular paths through the snow among the willows and along the river banks, and that the Indians, by means of snares set in these paths, capture great numbers of them.

The willow grouse commences to lay early in June, and it is said that an egg is deposited every day until the full number is reached. The eggs are curiously marked with dots, scratches and blotches of deep reddish purple on a ground of dark cream colour, and are usually about ten in number. In September and October the various broods are said to gather together in immense flocks, but when winter has fairly set in they separate again into small packs of from fifteen to thirty individuals.

The males of this species are said to assume their red plumage as soon as the rocks and higher ground

become bare, and at this season they spend a part of the day perched on large stones or the stumps of trees calling to the females in loud guttural, croaking tones. The females assume their summer dress early in June. It is an interesting fact that the sharp-tailed grouse sometimes utters a rough guttural croak which answers admirably to the description above given of the call of the male willow grouse. We have heard it only once, but it seemed so curious a note that it made a strong impression on our minds. While travelling in Dakota in 1874, an old female, with a brood of well-grown young, was started on the prairies, and the individuals of the family separated and flew in all directions. It happened that we remained on the spot whence they had flown, for about half an hour, and, during the whole time, we heard this strange call uttered by the old hen which was trying to collect the brood, and soon the young began to reply by a similar note. That there might be no question about the matter, we followed up one of the young and shot it in the act.

The Western Cliff-Dwellers.

OF late, blown over the plains, come stories of strange, newly-discovered cities of the far south-west; picturesque piles of masonry, of an age unknown to tradition. These ruins mark an era among antiquarians. The mysterious mound builders fade into comparative insignificance before the grander and more ancient cliff-dwellers, whose castles lift their towers amid the sands of Arizona and crown the terraced slopes of the Rio Mancos and the Hovenweep.

A ruin accidentally discovered by A. D. Wilson, of the Hayden Survey, several years ago, while he was pursuing his labours as chief of the topographical corps in Southern Colorado, is described to me by Mr. Wilson as a stone building, about the size of the Patent Office. It stood upon the bank of the Animas, in the San Juan country, and contained perhaps five hundred rooms. The roof and portion of the walls had fallen, but the part standing indicated a height of four storeys. A number of the rooms were fairly preserved, had small loop-hole windows, but no outer doors. The building had doubtless been entered originally by means of ladders resting on niches, and drawn in after the occupants. The floors were of cedar, each log as large around as a man's head, the spaces filled neatly by smaller poles and twigs, covered by a carpet of cedar bark. The ends of timber were bruised and frayed, as if severed by a dull instrument. In the vicinity were some stone hatchets, and saws made of sandstone slivers about two feet long, worn to a smooth edge.

A few hundred yards from the mammoth building was a second large house in ruins, and between the two strongholds rows of small dwellings, built of cobble-stones laid in *adobe*, and arranged along streets, after the style of the village of to-day. The smaller houses were in a more advanced state of ruin, on account of the round stones being more readily disintegrated by the elements than the heavy masonry.

The streets and houses of this deserted town are

overgrown by juniper and pinon—the latter a dwarf wide-spreading pine, which bears beneath the scales of its cones delicious and nutritious nuts. From the size of the dead, as well as the living trees, and from their position on the heap of crumbling stone, Mr. Wilson concludes that a great period of time has elapsed since the buildings fell. How many hundred years they stood after desertion before yielding to the inroads of time cannot be certainly known.

The presence of sound wood in the houses does not set aside their antiquity. In the dry, pure air of southern Colorado, wood fairly protected will last for centuries. In Asia cedar-wood has been kept a thousand years, and in Egypt cedar is known to have been in perfect preservation two thousand years after it left the forest. The cedars throughout the territories of the south-west do not rot, even in the groves. They die and stand erect, solid and sapless. The winds and whirling sands carve the dead trees into forms of fantastic beauty, drill holes through the trunks, and play at hide-and-go-seek in the perforated limbs until, after ages of resistance, they literally blow away in atoms of fine, clean dust.

On the Rio San Juan, about twenty-five miles distant from the city of Animas, Mr. Wilson discovered the following evening a similar pile, looming solemnly in the twilight near their camping place. The scene as described was weird in the extreme. As the moon arose, the shadows of the phantom buildings were thrown darkly across the silvery plain. The blaze of camp-fires, the tiny tents, the negro cook, the men in buckskin hunting garb, and the picketed mules, made a strange picture of the summer's night, with background of moonlit desert and crumbling ruins, on whose ramparts towered dead, gaunt cedars, lifting their bleached skeletons like sheeted ghosts within the silent watch-towers of the murky past.—*Scribner's*.

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**Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.**

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XLII.—PRISONERS.



IN the meantime, to Hester's horror, she found that they were to be prisoners in Lauré's cabin, and that the drunken scoundrel who shared it with him kept coming down, blinking and leering at them, making their very blood run cold.

His offensive manner was, however, for the time stopped by the Cuban, who came down, and, pointing to the inner cabin, bade them go in there.

Their only course was to obey; and the two trembling women crouched together, dreading the coming night, and yet hoping that some successful effort would be made for their release.

"Let us hope and pray, Bessy," said Hester, trying to be cheerful, in spite of her misery. "Dear old Rasp's words were not without meaning."

"But is he to be trusted?" sobbed Bessy. "He was with our enemies."

"Trusted? yes," cried Hester. "His behaviour must have been to deceive the wretches, and he and old Oakum are working for our release."

"If I could only be as hopeful as you are, Hester!"

"I am full of hope now," cried Hester. "I can wait, and feel strong and full of energy, with my husband's trust. Time back, I could have died in my misery."

As the hours passed on, they could hear the Cuban and his companion talking in the next cabin, and the clink of glasses told that they were drinking.

All on deck was very still. They had heard the sounds of preparation till nightfall, and then everything became very quiet; and, clinging together, the two women sat, with every sense on the strain, listening for the danger they knew to be at hand, while they hoped for the rescue that might come.

It grew rapidly dark, and their cabin was only lit by the gleams that came beneath and through a few ventilation holes in the door, a glance through which, once timidly taken, showed the Cuban drinking heavily with his companion, who grew more stupid and riotous, while the only effect upon Lauré was to make his eyes glow as he sat glancing from time to time at the door.

Every now and then, too, some allusions to the prisoners made the women's hearts palpitate with horror; and more than once Hester glanced at the little window as if through that she must seek for the help that was so long in coming; for that, she knew, would be protection from the outrage she dreaded for them both.

Neither spoke now of their fear, but clung the closer as they listened, till suddenly they heard Lauré rise and go on deck, when their breathing became more even, and they sighed with relief.

But hardly had the Cuban's foot left the steps, when his companion raised his head from the table where he had been simulating sleep, and glancing round for a moment, he rose and came to the inner cabin-door, opened it, and thrust in his head.

"Come here, my birdie," he said, thickly. "One of you has got to be my wife; and let's see, you're the captain's," he continued, with a hoarse laugh, as he thrust Hester aside and caught Bessy in his arms, holding her tightly, in spite of her struggles, till she uttered a long and piercing shriek.

The next moment there was a rapid step on the stairs, and the Cuban rushed savagely into the cabin, sword in hand.

He made for the ruffian who held Bessy, but as soon as he realized whom the scoundrel had, he uttered a hoarse laugh, and, as if incited by his companion's example, he threw the sword upon the table, and caught Hester in his arms.

For a few moments she struggled hard, but her strength failed; and, as she felt how powerless she was becoming, she tried to shriek; but, as if prepared for this, Lauré, laughing, placed one hand upon her lips, while the other clasped her to him so tightly that she could not move.

Just then, however, Bessy, who had been struggling long and bravely with her assailant, uttered a series of piercing screams, freed herself from his grasp, and, half mad with fear and horror, threw her arm round Hester.

"Curse you, you noisy jade!" cried the Cuban, furiously; and he struck her brutally across the mouth with the back of his hand, as he released Hester, who sank shivering on the cabin floor.

"Here, come away now," cried the Cuban, sharply; and, thrusting the other before him, he hurried out and secured the door, leaving the two prisoners sobbing in each other's arms, while the light through

the holes in the door streamed in long rays above their heads.

Hester was the first to recover herself, and she rose and tried to comfort her stricken companion, than whom now she seemed to be far the stronger in spirit.

"Help must come soon, Bessy," she whispered. "They will have heard our screams."

"It would be better to die," sobbed Bessy. "There is no hope—no hope whatever."

"What!" cried Hester. "No hope? And with my brave, true husband on board? I tell you help will come, and soon."

"When it's too late," sobbed Bessy. "Those wretches will be back soon."

"Hush! listen," whispered Hester; and she stole to the door to peep through one of the holes, and see the drunken ruffian sitting there with his head down upon the table, apparently asleep.

The Cuban had evidently gone on deck, and, nerved now to take some desperate course, Hester stole back to where Bessy crouched.

"Get up—quickly," she whispered. "We must escape from the place now."

"But where—where—unless overboard?" wailed Bessy.

"To the deck—to the other cabin. They will fight for us. Dutch will save us from another such outrage as this."

Bessy rose up directly; endeavoured to be firm; but she tottered, and had to cling to the slighter woman.

They stood by the door while Hester tried it, but their hearts sank as they found that they were more of prisoners than they imagined, for the door was fastened on the outside, while, to make their position more painful, there were no means of securing it on the inner side.

All seemed very still; so still, in fact, that they could hear plainly the heavy breathing of the ruffian who was sleeping there alone; and as they stood trembling and listening, it seemed as if a light step was coming down the cabin stairs.

It came so cautiously and steadily that they did not dare to move lest they should not hear it. For a moment Hester was tempted to change her position, and gazed at the door; but a slight clicking noise arrested her, and she remained listening, and hopefully considering whether this could be some of the promised help.

All was silent again for a time, and then there was another strange click, and something fell upon the floor, as if a sword had been knocked down.

This was followed by a sharp rustling noise, and the sleeping ruffian rose up, growled loudly, pushed the lamp on one side, so that it creaked over the table, and then seemed to lay his head down again, and began to breathe heavily.

A minute or two, that seemed an hour, passed away, and still the two women listened, feeling certain that help was coming, especially as the rustling noise once more commenced; and then, as they waited longingly for the unfastening of their prison door, they plainly heard the Cuban's step on the deck.

In a moment or two, Lauré began to descend.

Their hearts sank as they heard him coming, and they shrank away from the door.

It was now evidently long past midnight, and as soon as Lauré was left alone, Hester and her companion began to tremble once more for their fate.

The Cuban was evidently restless and uneasy, for he kept getting up and walking to the stairs and listening, as if in doubt; but as an hour glided by, and all seemed perfectly still, he remained longer in his seat, and at last, as Hester watched him, she saw his glance turned towards the inner cabin, and to her horror he rose, and, with a peculiar smile upon his face, came and laid his hand upon the lock of the door.

The supreme moment seemed to have come, and, with her heart beating furiously, Hester made up her mind to make one more effort to reach the deck, shouting the while for help, and then, if no other help came, she told herself that she could seek it in the sea.

Her hands clasped those of Bessy for a moment convulsively, and then dropping them, she stood upon her guard, as the lock was shot back, the door was flung open, and in an instant Lauré caught her in his arms, when, as her lips failed to utter a shriek, there was a heavy fall on deck, the noise of feet hurrying to and fro, a crash, and with an oath Lauré rushed across the cabin, and Hester staggered back trembling into Bessy's arms.

"What does it mean?" the latter whispered, hoarsely.

"Help, at last," panted Hester, as the noise on deck increased. Shots were fired, there was another heavy fall, and the clashing together of steel, followed by the voice of Lauré calling to his men to come on.

Before they dared to hope for safety, Dutch literally leaped down into the cabin, with a cutlass in his hand, followed by Mr. Meldon, both men pale with excitement, and stained with blood.

"Quick!" cried Dutch, catching his wife by one hand—"the scoundrels may prove too many for us."

"Bessy, darling," whispered Mr. Meldon, hoarsely; and for a moment he folded her in his arms, before leading her hastily on deck after Dutch, who had already hurried Hester below into the main cabin.

Bessy followed her on the instant, and the two men rushed forward again to where a desperate fight was going on, which resulted in Lauré and his party being driven below, but not until some severe wounds had been given on either side.

But the fighting was not yet over. The enemy began firing through the bulkheads, and the women and the captain's son had to be got on deck from the cabin, where they had been placed for safety.

CHAPTER XLIII.—SAM OAKUM'S NARRATIVE.

AFTER a terrible set-out that we had with the diving, and all sorts of troubles and horrors, I got to think that we must not wait any longer, and I told Rasp so, meaning to warn them below; and this I did—for I pitched a bullet down into the cabin, wrapped in a bit of paper, and on that bit of paper was written "To-night."

"Now, if they're the chaps I take 'em for," I said, "they'll have pistols loaded and cutlasses ready for

action." But, leaving that to the skipper and Mr. Pugh for their part, I warned Rolls and Lennie. I'd also a chance of warning Rasp; so all I had to do was to warn poor old Pollo, which I did, just after that ill-looking, bloodthirsty villain of a yaller Cuban had said that he'd have the ship took somewhere else.

I wanted to get down to the cabin again; for the rascal had now took it into his head to shut those two poor women up there, and I felt that it was indeed time to act so as to save them. How to get down again, though, this time, after the troubles and escapes I had last, I hardly knew; but still I had to risk it, like a man.

"I may try the same dodge again," I said, "if that beauty's down there half drunk, and I will."

I'd been saving up on purpose; and as soon as it was dark that night, and just before they set the watch, I put two good big bottles of rum where I thought they would find them, and then waited to see.

All things turned out just as I could have wished; for going by an hour after, I could tell by the chatter going on that the three chaps were at the rum, which they supposed to have been left by mistake by those who had the watch the night before. Some of the chaps were carousing in the fore-cuddy, where they could easily be boxed up, and the others were all card-playing in the skipper's cabin.

It seemed almost a hopeless case, now it was come to the point; but I felt that making up one's mind was half the battle, and I was up now, and meant to do or die.

Rolls and Lennie were on deck, and knew their parts well enough: one to manage the chap at the wheel; t'other to shut up the party in the fore-cuddy; I meaning to secure the cabin-hatch; and then I thought if that was done, we should have time to settle and lash the watch, who ought to be half-drunk, leaving our hands free to keep those quiet who would be trying to get out of the cabin.

You see, my plan was to get Mr. Pugh up through the hole I made in my fall, if I could get the fellow away who was stationed there. And here it was that I trusted to the rum; for before now Lauré had been content to have a chap at the cabin door, leaving the watch to make sure the prisoner did not get on deck.

I was about right; for we three had not been squatting long under the bulwarks before one of the watch calls out "Harry!" and the sentry fellow goes to where they were busy with the rum. The next moment I was at the broken skylight, and whispered down the one word, "Tools;" for I was afraid them playing in the other cabin might hear.

Mr. Dutch was ready; and the next minute I was under the bulwark again with the arms the doctor had passed up; and we three had each a pistol in our belts and a cutlash in our hands before the sentry chap came back—Rolls having his knife, and being right for anything.

The night was not so dark as I could have wished; but it was dark enough for us, and, as I expected, the sentry couldn't resist the smell of that rum, and in a very few minutes he was along with the others again, and did not seem disposed to come back. So

now seeming to be my time, I said the word. Rolls crept off one way, Lennie the other, with their orders that there was to be no bloodshed, only for a last resource. Then I went to the skylight, keeping the side nearest to the cabin hatch, when I turned cold all over; for I heard Lauré's cough, and he came up the stairs as if to look out.

There was nothing else for it. I knew that if he missed the sentry, he would most likely spoil my plan; so, at the risk of being seen by the watch, I stood boldly up in the sentry's place, took a step this way and that way, and then began to whistle softly to myself like.

It was a bold trick, but Lauré was taken in. He could see some one was on guard; he could hear the watch; and the face of the man at the wheel was plain enough by the binnacle light, so that all seemed well.

"If Rolls only makes his attempt now we're undone," I thought. But all kept still aft, and then I shuddered like for fear the Cuban should speak to me; but he did not say a word, only turned to go down again; and my breath came freer, as I felt for the lashings I had got ready for the prisoners I hoped to make; while I'm afraid if Lauré had come up to me then I should have been his death, and then have secured the cabin hatch.

As I said before, I breathed freer, and turned my attention to where the four men were at the rum; but the next moment I was taken all aback again, for Lauré came up once more, stood still, as if listening, and then saying to me, "Keep a sharp look-out," he turned once more to go.

"Right," I mumbles out, as if my mouth was full of baccy; and the next minute I could hear his voice quite plain through the other half of the skylight.

"Now or never," I says to myself, in dread lest that watchful cur should spoil my chance; and, going down on hands and knees, I leaned through the hole; for he had gone down now to where those two poor women were, and I was in a state of horror as to how they'd fare.

"With a will, Mr. Dutch!" I says; and grasping my arms, next moment he was through, and lying on the deck aside me, just as we could hear the scrooping noise of Rolls closing the hatch of the fore-cuddy.

Then up came the skipper and Mr. Parkley.

"Quick, Mr. Wilson!" I says; and the naturalist had hold of my arms; but, just as I expected, he shut up when he was wanted, for there was a slight scuffle by the wheel as I gave a heave, the watch stopped their chatter to listen, and as I rose up like to hoist Mr. Wilson out, he went back into the cabin with a crash, falling against the bulkhead which separated it from the cabin where Lauré was, and if I had not darted to the hatch, he would have been up with the hellhounds at his back. But he was too late: I had the hatch over, and then turned to help Rolls, who, like a brick as he was, had gone to the watch, while Mr. Dutch dashed down to fetch up the women.

I need hardly tell you that the skipper was already in the thick of it; and Pollo coming up, having silenced his man with a tap on the head, it was even

odds; but the fellows fought savagely, and it was not until the sentry was cut down, and another had a bullet through him, that the other two were lashed fast neck and heels together.

Now, all this time they had been thundering and battering away at both hatches, but I was in hopes that they would hold fast till our hands were at liberty, when a crash told us that something had given way, and, running aft, we heard two pistol-shots fired quickly, one after the other, and could see the flashes and a figure standing by the hatch.

My hand was raised to fire, but I dropped the pistol, for I remembered that it was empty; and, sword in hand, with my blood up, I dashed at whoever it might be, but only to miss my aim, for he darted aside, and caught my cutlash with his in an instant.

It was cleanly done, that guard; and I shouldn't have thought he had it in him, for it was no other than Wilson, who had climbed out, well armed, and sent a couple of shots through the hole Lauré and his party had battered through the hatch. He was a friend in need and a friend in deed that time; for if he hadn't come up as he had, it would perhaps have gone precious hard with us.

But there was no time to be lost, for I expected every moment that they would find their way up on deck from one of the cabin windows; and now, in place of wishing for darkness, we prayed for light, so as to be able to see our enemies, and from which side we should next be attacked.

I wanted Mr. Dutch to take the lead, but he would not—only asked to be set his work, so I set him at the cabin hatch; Pollo I planted on the poop, to cut down the first man who should try to climb on deck; Mr. Parkley over the two bound men of the watch, and the wounded; and Rolls over the hatch of the forksel; for, though we'd got the upper hand, there was no knowing for how long it would be; and, besides, we all knew well that if once the savages below got us under, there would be no mercy for us now.

What a night that was, and how long the day seemed coming! I was going about from place to place, to see if I could make out danger anywhere, when Mr. Dutch called to me, and made a communication, whose end was that, with Mr. Wilson's help, we drew the two prisoners to the cabin hatch, and left him to guard them and the cabin, while Mr. Dutch and I dropped through the skylight quick as thought. But they heard us through the bulkhead; and directly after we heard a hand on the door, and the key move, to which I answered with a shot, crashing through the panel, and whoever it was dropped, while for reply another bullet was sent back.

Mr. Pugh had darted to the inner cabin, while I kept guard, and now appeared with Mrs. Pugh, Mr. Studwick and his sister, she holding him up on one side, and Mr. Meldon on the other.

"Quick as you can, sir," I whispered, "for there's some devilment 'most ready;" when, mounting the table himself, Mr. Dutch put a chair ready, and helped Mr. Studwick and his sister up beside him. He then drew up the chair, planted it firmly, and was through the skylight in an instant. He then asked

Miss Studwick to mount, but she would not until after her brother; and, with the doctor's help, the poor feeble young fellow was dragged up. Then I heard a sound as startled me, and running to the table, I caught Mrs. Pugh in my arms, and dragged her down and to one side, just before three or four pistol shots came tearing through the bulkhead, making the splinters fly in all directions.

"Now, up quick," I said; and leaping on to the table, I dragged her on, lifted her in my arms to Mr. Dutch, and the next minute she was in safety, when, expecting another firing, I jumped down again, and went on my hands and knees.

Just as I expected, they fired again; but, being dark, their shots did not tell; and before they could reload, I had jumped upon the table and climbed out to the rest.

"It's a wonder almost that they did not try to make them safe before," I said, panting; and then, having made Mr. Studwick, his sister, and Mrs. Pugh comfortable under the bulwarks, we began to take steps for making ourselves a little surer. For instance, we laid a tarpaulin on the cabin skylight, and a spare sail over that, and then again on the sail we coiled all the rope and cable we could. The cabin and forksel hatches we served in the same fashion, so that it was quite impossible for any one to get up that way; while just about daybreak, when a head appeared over the rail, close to the wheel, the chop old Rasp gave sent it back again in a moment, so that there did not seem much to fear at present.

Daylight, and then glorious sunrise—a big word that for a common sailor; but sailors, as a rule, think a deal of the bright sunshine and the dancing waters. And a bright morning that was, cheering us all up, so that, with a grin, I went up to Mr. Dutch and axed his pardon for hitting him—axing too, at the same time, how he found himself after the stab I put in his pocket. But there, instead of laughing, if he didn't turn all of a tremble, and his voice was husky as he shook me by both hands, and says—

"God bless you, Oakum, and forgive me for ever doubting so true a man."

"Don't you be in a hurry, sir, with your thanks. Maybe we ain't half done yet. We've divided the ship, and got the deck and a breaker of water, and there's what rum them four didn't finish; but they've got the below-decks and all the prog, unless we can find some anywhere else. We've got the upper hand, but now the question is, can we keep it?"

"No, you can't," shouts one of the fellows lying tied on the deck. "So—"

He didn't say any more, for Mr. Watson fetched him a slap on the face with the flat of his cutlash, and then the fellow lay and muttered most savagely.

We had a bit of a refresher in the shape of some cold water with a dash of rum in it; when Mr. Dutch said that there were some provisions in their cabin below, and volunteered to get them if I stood at the skylight opening with two loaded pistols, to command the door that Mr. Dutch had kept on the outside.

I did not much like running any more risks than we could help; but food I knew we should be obliged to have, and if we could get it without

attacking Lauré and his party, so much the better. For though I knew that it must come to that, I wanted to put it off as long as I could, and I was just making ready to go to the skylight with the skipper, when there was a shout from Mr. Wilson, and at the same moment a bullet struck the bulwark close to where Mrs. Pugh was sitting.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MR. DUTCH PUGH sprang like a tiger towards the cabin skylight, where, through a slit in the sailcloth and tarpaulin, you could see a hand holding a pistol twisting about to get back again; but, though it had most likely come through easy enough, the edges of the stiff tarpaulin now closed round the wrist; and though the owner seemed to struggle hard, and, having a peephole somewhere, shrieked out as Mr. Dutch came on, there was no saving the hand, upon which the cutlash came down like a streak of lightning, cutting it to the bone, when it was at last dragged through, leaving the pistol upon the deck.

Now, this came from the side of the skylight over the mutineers' cabin, for so far they did not seem to have got into the one where Mr. Dutch and his friends had been; and, seeing this, Mr. Dutch again volunteered to go down, after we had moved Mr. John Studwick and the ladies for safety under the port bulwarks, thrown another sail or two over the skylight, and then bowed up a bit of an awning; for the sun came out, and beat heavily upon the poor sick man.

But having been made a big man of now—the skipper being bad with a wound—and being consulted on all points, I give in against anybody going down; for, says I, “You’re too vallable a man to be spared, Mr. Dutch, sir; and one can only go down after that there prog when we’re reg’lar dead beat.”

My advice was taken, though if it hadn’t been I don’t know as I should have gone and hanged myself; and there we sat, listening to the movements of the mutineers below, and wondering what devilry they were planning, till all was as still as still, the wind falling calm, and the sea turning like glass; while the only sound we could hear was the twitter, twitter of Mr. Wilson’s birds down below, which, by good luck, had got plenty of water and seeds; for, knowing as the little things had sense enough only to eat just as much as is good for them, I had well filled their boxes the day before.

“D’ye hear the birds, Oakum?” says Mr. Wilson to me, just as if there was nothing else in the world but birds, and I do believe as he thought they was the most important things living, save only for a bit when he was thinking of Miss Bessy; and perhaps, after all, he thought her only a kind of sweet song-bird as he would like to have along with the others. However, “D’ye hear the birds, Oakum?” he says.

“Yes, sir, I do,” I says. “I was just a-thinking about ‘em when you spoke.”

“Were you?” he says, brightening up, and laying down his pistol.

“Yes, I was,” I says; “but don’t you lay down that there bullet iron, for you never know how soon you may want it, sir. While we’re like this, sir, you’ll have to sleep with both eyes open, and you

a-nussin’ a pistol; while as to what you gets to eat, you must pick that up on the point of your cutlash.”

“But about the birds,” he says, eagerly. “How many are there left?”

“Well, sir,” I says, “I can’t rightly say; but I was a-thinking that if we could get ‘em up on deck by shoving a hole through the wires with a boat-oar, there’d be enough of ‘em, with ‘conomy, to last us all for eight days.”

“What?” he says, staring.

“Why,” I says, “lowancing ourselves to one big bird apiece, or two little uns, we could keep ourselves alive for a bit.”

He didn’t say a word, but looked just for all the world as if he thought it would ha’ been a deal more like the right thing to do to cut one of us up small to feed his little cock-sparrows and things, if they ran short of food. So, just out of a bit of spite like, I says to him, drily, “You might try Miss Studwick with a bird now, sir,” I says.

“Hold your tongue!” he says, quite fierce, and looking to see if anybody had heard.

“Wouldn’t make a bad roast, sir; and this here sun’s hot enough to cook a bullock.”

“Will you be quiet?” he says.

“And she’d pick them bones, and thoroughly enjoy—”

“Oakum,” says Mr. Dutch, just then in a whisper, “what’s that?”

I’d heard the sound at the same moment as he did, and for a moment it didn’t strike me as to what it might be; but the next instant I was at the side with a cocked pistol in my hand, an example followed by all the others, for, through our bad watching, two men out of the fore-cabin had dropped softly overboard, risking the sharks, and were making for the poop, when I hailed them to stop, covering one with a pistol the while.

He saw that it was of no use, so he asked for a rope directly, and heaving him one, we had him aboard, lashed and lying down upon the deck beside his mates in less than no time; but the other one swam on and on, diving down every moment so that I shouldn’t hit him. But I could have done it if I’d liked, though I did not want to shed more blood; so we let him swim on till he began to paddle behind and shout to Lauré for a rope, when we could hear the cabin windows opening.

“Here, this won’t do, sir,” I says; and “Hi! here, you, Rasp,” I shouts, “don’t you leave that fore-hatch,” for he was coming away and leaving it unprotected. So he went back; and, getting hold of a line, I makes a running noose, and going right aft, I tries to drop it over the fellow’s head; but he kept dodging and ducking under, till at last I made a feint, and the water being clear as glass, just as he was coming up again I dropped the noose over his head and one arm, drawing it tight in a moment, and there he was struggling like a harpooned porpoise.

I thought I’d lost him once, for a stroke was made at the line with a cutlash out of one of the cabin lights, but I soon towed him out of reach, when Lennie threw him the end of a rope, and we had him aboard too.

Now, what with two wounded men and four pri-

soners, we had our hands more than full; so after a short bit of consideration, it was decided to risk the opening of the fore-cabin hatch, and make the four men go down one at a time; we, for humanity's sake, keeping the prisoners who were wounded.

So we took the four with their hands lashed, and then, with Mr. Wilson only on guard, we four stood ready; and Mr. Dutch giving the signal, Rasp raised the hatch, when one fellow leaped up savage, but I had a capstan-bar ready, and down he went again quicker than he came up. Then another tried, but I served him the same, when they stopped that game, and began to fire up the hatch, till I sang out that we were going to send down their mates.

But sending down was one thing, and making them go was another; for the first fellow turned rusty and wouldn't stir, till, seeing that half-measures were no good, I nodded to Mr. Dutch, and he put a pistol to the fellow's ear, and at the same time I gave him just a tap on the head with a marline-spike, when he went down sharp, and the others followed.

Rasp clapped the hatch down so quickly that the last chap's head must have felt it; but that put a stop to their firing up at us. And this being done, we felt safer, though none the less compelled to keep a strict watch.

And so the day wore away—not a long day at all; for, rather dreading the night as I did, it seemed to come on quickly, and this was the time I felt sure the mutineers would make their attack, perhaps to get the better of us.

The night turned out bright and starlight; and after making the best arrangements we could for the watch, we patiently waited for any new dangers that might befall us. Even Mr. John Studwick, sick as he was, insisted upon taking his turn at watching, and having now plenty of arms, he sat with his sister by him to guard the fore-hatch, Miss Bessy going from time to time to the side, and keeping an eye to the cabin window. Two or three times, too, Mrs. Pugh came to me, and talked about our position, in whispers; and, somehow or another, she seemed to grow upon one, until I swore to myself that I'd die sooner than the poor women should be left to the tender mercies of the scoundrels who had seized the ship.

We had two or three false alarms during the night, but that was all; and the next day broke, finding us all half-famished; and now it seemed that either we must attack the party in the after-cabin, or one of us must go down and try for some provisions.

Mr. Meldon said he would go, and he turned towards Miss Studwick, as if expecting her to say something; but she never looked his way at all. So, after making our arrangements, we lifted the tarpaulin, Mr. Meldon dropped through, and in a short time handed up to me several tins of preserved meat, some biscuit, and a couple of bottles of wine.

He made four journeys before I heard even a movement in the next cabin, and then there came a muttering as of some one waking from a drunken sleep, and we all made up our minds that, having plenty of rum below, the cabin party had had a drinking night of it.

I never expected to see him up on deck without a few shots being exchanged, but there he was, safe; and, after dropping the tarpaulin, the provisions in moderation were served out, and no meal was ever more welcome.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

Birds and the late Frost.

A CORRESPONDENT, writing to a contemporary on the above subject, has been urging the claim—nay, even more, absolute right—to outdoor relief of thrush and starling, fieldfare and blackbird, yellowhammer and wagtail, and even of that more audacious Major Bagstock of his race, the London sparrow.

Birds of all kinds, he reminds us, suffer terribly in a severe frost. The running streams, the margins of lakes and pond, the edges of the ditch, the puddles by the roadside, which in kinder times yielded plump caddis-grubs, and nourishing beetles, and wriggling red worms, and aquatic larvæ of every kind and sort, are now converted by the touch of the relentless frost into one mass of solid ice. Nor do the fields and hedgerows offer better fare. In mild weather the standing grass on the ditch-side is full of seed still unshed; at the roots of beech, and fir, and oak, and lime, and plane, and hornbeam, lie masses of fallen fruit, from which a rich living can easily be picked.

A bird's bill, delicate as it may seem to those who have not studied its structure, is a weapon of singular strength; and if the ground is strewn with beech mast, and worms can force their way through the surface, then, from the missel-thrush to the wren, and from the blackbird to the little hedge-sparrow, no denizen of our groves need starve. But when the earth for an inch or more below its surface is as hard as iron, and the snow wraps hedge and field alike in its thick white winding-sheet, then, indeed, the birds are sorely put to it.

Writing to Daines Barrington, in 1770, Gilbert White tells him:—"When birds come to suffer by severe frost, I find that the first that fail and die are the redwing, fieldfares, and then the song-thrushes." And six years later, speaking in another and well-known letter of an unusually severe frost, he observes that "the thrushes and blackbirds were mostly destroyed, and the partridges were so thinned by the weather and poachers that few remained to breed the following year." Partridges in snowy weather are certain, of course, unless the keeper be more than usually vigilant, to fall victims to the first village boy that pursues them, numbed as they are with frost, and half-starved for want of their favourite food—the rich *trouvaille* yielded by the surface of fallow and fresh-ploughed fields.

Nor is it less easy to conjecture why the larger soft-billed songsters, such as the fieldfare, the redwing, the blackbird, and the thrush, should be the first to succumb to the rigour of a severe winter. Their very size renders it difficult for them to obtain shelter from the piercing cold. They are almost entirely insectivorous, and so find themselves suddenly reduced to want; and they are, we may add,

a favourite and easy mark for the gunner whose sole object it is to fetch home material for a pasty, and who consequently is by no means too proud to bring smaller game to bag.

The larger insectivorous birds, especially those of the wading class, fare more happily. They repair seaward, to the salt marshes and estuaries, where they pick up marine slugs, and broken fragments of fish and spawn, and other such miscellaneous drift of ocean. As for the smaller creatures, who chiefly fare on seed and grain, they seek the woods where patches of turf still lie open, or else more boldly approach out-dwellings, as if to beg our help. The sparrow haunts the rickyard; the dainty little wag-tail walks delicately up and down in full sight of the stable. On the lawn, the starling and the field-fare show themselves in full sight of the windows. Robin and tomtit hang under the eaves, and keep a keen eye on all stray kitchen refuse. Even the heron seeks the home pond, and grosbeak, crossbill, and hawfinch lay aside their natural timidity and shyness, and cluster round about the orchard, and amid the Scotch fir, and spruce, and cedar on the lawn, and in the thick Portuguese laurel that fringes the carriage drive.

"Let us not," pleaded the correspondent, "forget our little birds. Now that the country is deeply clad in her winter robe, one can notice daily how the poor little birds that please our hearts with their cheerful song in the spring, and free our orchards from damaging insects, cluster mournfully together, suffering from hunger and cold. Thousands can be saved and kept from starvation if every mistress of the house will give instruction to sweep a small space free from snow, and throw to them every morning a few crumbs and bits of food. There are few kind actions which can be done more easily and cheaply."

It is difficult to add anything to a plea so simple and so clearly stated. We may perhaps, however, be forgiven, if we venture to amplify it by a few practical suggestions. In the first place, then, our readers will do well to bear in mind that, if the aid given is to be effective, the instructions of our correspondent to "sweep a small space free from snow" is absolutely essential. Birds are guided almost entirely by their sight, and when all Nature is shrouded in snow they at once pick out and make for the first open spot. Wherever the ground is clear, there, they know, will something or other almost certainly be found. If sweeping the snow away from a patch some few yards square be impossible, then let ashes be sprinkled freely on the surface. Wherever the dreary white expanse is broken, there the birds will gather together.

Nor is this all. It must not be supposed that the advice can only be put in effect by dwellers in the country. London is girded by a rich belt of woodland. To the east lie Epping and Hainault; westward is Windsor Forest; on the north are the Hampstead and Harrow hills; on the south the glades and thickets of Surrey. Whenever the winter is harder than usual, from every quarter of the compass the birds come flocking into town; and in our parks and squares, and in the trim little gardens of Clapham and Chelsea, and Kilburn, and St. John's

Wood, and old Islington, and even Brixton, thrush and starling, and robin and titmouse, freely show themselves, and boldly beg for aid.

It is, indeed, strange that the natural history of the Regent's Park and its neighbourhood should still remain unwritten. Mr. Buckland tells us that, in his own "little garden" in Albany-street, or its immediate neighbourhood, he has observed at different times the missel thrush, fieldfare, and song-thrush, the redwing, blackbird, and redbreast, the common and the lesser whitethroat, the great tit, the blue and the long-tailed tit, the skylark, chaffinch, and house sparrow, the starling, carrion crow, rook, and jack-daw, the common creeper, the swallow, martin, and swift, and the wild duck and moorhen.

Here we have a list of more than twenty welcome visitants whom stress of weather has driven to seek the friendly shelter of the metropolis. For, even to a country-born and country-bred bird, London—especially at such a time as the present—has two great advantages to offer. In the first place, it is warm, and comfortable corners can be found in church towers and among stacks of chimneys, and under gutter-pipes, and beneath overhanging roofs. And, secondly, there is food to be found, if not always in savoury quarters. The back yard, the dust-bin, the mews and livery-stable, nay, even the street itself, can be successfully requisitioned. As for the cab-rank, with its stray droppings of oats and cut chaff, it is a veritable land of Goshen, which the London sparrow, the greediest and most pugnacious of all birds of his size, monopolizes as his especial domain, from which he relentlessly drives all stray intruders.

Those who would judge for themselves how intelligent are birds, and how soon they can be taught to recognize those who treat them kindly, have only to throw out each morning in their garden, or on their window-sill, or in the balcony, the crumbs from the breakfast table, supplemented, if need be, with oats, hempseed, millet, or buckwheat. In a week the little creatures will come to their meal as regularly as the clock strikes the hour. In a month they will almost allow themselves to be taken in the hand. Let this be done through winter, and then in the spring let little boxes be fixed up, out of reach of cat and school-boy, and let small bags of hay and wool be hung close by, and the sparrow will build her nest and hatch out two if not three broods in full sight of the window. The starling, too, will come, if a warm and secure nook is offered him, and more especially if there are pigeons in the neighbourhood; nor is there any more pleasant or cheerful music in all nature than the happy chatter of the starling at early dawn.

We have only to encourage birds, and they will come to us. In the Botanical Gardens in the Regent's Park, which are practically private property, and where all the year round the feathered visitors are absolutely unmolested, the variety and number of birds that yearly build is very remarkable. The dense groves of evergreen yield them shelter; the neighbourhood of the hot-houses and workshops yields food; cats are few and far between; nor does schoolboy hurl the unerring stone or fix in position the relentless trap. And yet the Inner Circle is not

exceptionally favoured. Wherever in London there is a garden, birds can be persuaded to frequent it, and—if there be a tree in it—to build their nests. In the Temple, and under the shadow of St. Paul's, starling and sparrow, titmouse and swallow, have permanently taken up their abode.

Birds, indeed, are, if only we encourage them, the most friendly of all living things—the most docile, and, when kindly treated, the most affectionate. The brain of a parrot or a canary is, bulk for bulk, and weight for weight, ten or twelve times the capacity of that of an elephant; and if we have comparatively but few anecdotes of the intelligence of pet birds, it is because sufficient pains and attention are not bestowed upon them. Falconers, however; wild-fowlers, who have kept decoy ducks; pigeon fanciers; breeders of canaries, and experienced keepers of aviaries, can tell stories which it would well repay some modern Gilbert White to collect. And if any Londoner is disposed, out of mere indifference, to think birds and their ways not altogether worthy of serious attention, he cannot do better than to watch from now till autumn the practices and habits of the London sparrow.

Ducking under Difficulty.

I HAD been for a week too sick to try cases, but well enough to be out of bed, when I received a telegraphic summons to come and shoot ducks at Leed's Point.

The despatch took me in the humour, for the sight of pleas, bills, narrs, replevins, and replications had become extremely disgusting to me, and even politics—which Seward (the great 'Wm.) said was the "sum of all the sciences"—failed to charm me.

A six-mile drive over a good road, in a country stage, by the moonlight, on as sweet a night as that upon which "Jessica sat and sighed her soul away toward the Grecian tents," led us up to the door of Joab Sooy's hotel. Joab, who is a double-fisted, warm-hearted, big-browed Jerseyman, welcomed us right royally to the freedom of the hostelry, and to a supper of buckwheat cakes, Jersey sausages, and coffee the colour of Sammy Beetle's (Quaker) coat; coffee as cheering to the eye and the taste as Blennerhasset's "shruberry—that Shenstone might have envied."

High Sheriff Adams, as brimful of mother wit as an egg is of meat, had provided himself with an overcoat pocketful of Irish potatoes, one loaf of bread, a bag of salt, and a demijohn of old "Gibson."

Like the Western woman, I never could abide the taste of corn; but when it took the shape of cornjuice, I could worry a little down.

Adams knew this, and knew that I was really too sick to go a-ducking; but had enough of the miching mallecho in him to desire much to see how a Jersey lawyer would behave at four o'clock in the morning on the dreary, dreary moorland, with a carbuncle on the back of his neck—too sick for the labours of law, but well enough to seek brant and duck with a fowling-piece at the early hours of the morning.

Abner Doughty, the best gunner in the bay, called

for us at three a.m. the coldest November morning I had ever appreciated. Joab, feeling sympathy for me on account of my resemblance to Job—he of the many boils—gave us a hurried cup of coffee, which, like the gold which Tennyson says helps the hurt that honour feels, sweetened and braced us up for the toils of the day, which I knew would be considerable, as soon as I sniffed the morning breeze of as bracing a day as ever welcomed a skater on a winter's rink. There were four of us; besides the High Sheriff, with the "skipping spirit" Adams, came Doughty and his assistant, all loaded to the teeth with "traps," as well as our heavy guns.

We slashed through the "mash," as the countrymen call the marsh, for three miles before we struck our boats—two in number, beauties to look at, fair and frail, but so light that in after hours of our memorable day's hunting we could drag them single-handed out on the beach. It had been many years since I had seen the sun rise—in fact, I never remember having seen it rise before.

A long pull and a strong pull landed us, two miles from where we started, on a shelving beach, which our little boats no sooner touched than, by command of Skipper Abner Doughty, we hauled them up high and dry; and quick as willing hands, a little numbed with cold, could do, we had dug a trench, planted our boats in them, and built up a breast-work.

Abner planted his decoys swiftly as I can write the account of it, and then kindly loaded my double-barrel *secundum artem*, and told me to sit down in the little boat and keep still. Alfieri Adams (for so we had named him for the burning red of the hair of his head) clamoured for a cocktail, gazing with pathetic tenderness at the demijohn, which seemed as near and dear to him as the apple of his eye, albeit it was not apple-jack. The demijohn had to be opened, as he swore no duck should fall till one swallow (of Gibson) had helped to make a summer in his *estomach*. I am habitually a temperate man, and like John Albion Andrew, the noble Governor of Massachusetts, of blessed memory, not a total abstinent; but the truth of history must be told, when I say that that cocktail caused gladness of stomach all round the board. We had not crawled into our boats five minutes before a flock of brant (a bird always seeming to me to be half duck and half goose) circled around our decoys within easy distance of our shooting-irons, as we cautiously bent the pregnant hinges of the knee. Alfieri Adams blazed away, dropping two brant; simultaneously, just as any green duckist would do, I let drive both barrels, and down tumbled three royal big ones. Well, it might have been "ag'in the rules of the game," but I think the shout that went out of that red head, and from the vicinity of the carbuncle of M. S., could have been heard at Barnegat.

Abner Doughty looked disgusted, but "scooped in" the ducks, by hauling one of the light batteaux out into the bay, quick as lightning. Our success warmed us up. Even Alfieri cast no longing glance at his big demijohn, and said "Gibson" not once. He patted his plethoric side, with fat capon lined, and asked permission to build a fire, and roast some

potatoes, as it was eight of the clock in the morning, and before breakfast. "Some drinking, but no eating," said the sententious Doughty, "till this 'ere duck-shooting is done."

We relapsed into our respective boats. An hour passed, and we could see the flock of brant and ducks, thousands in the distance; for the bay is dotted with islands, and apparently from every island came the most sweet-voiced "honk" of the wild goose. It had become a question of endurance between me and the red-headed sheriff—one of the best fellows, too, to travel with the world ever saw—which could stand the cold the longest. Alfieri would crawl over and tell me some side-splitting anecdote, while the brant would be slowly coming down towards us with the tide. Then he would quietly slip beside his gunner, who had all he cared to do to keep the sheriff quiet.

"Hang it," said the gunner, "all lay still for them brant. You can't take them with no sort of *Hocum Pellus*, like you can them runaways around the Cape May Court-house."

Albert subsided. I sat shivering with the cold, and wishing myself as strong as Dr. Maginn's wild Irishman, the "calves of whose wicked-looking legs were three feet about, my dear." Presently our pulses warmed, and the laymen, at least among the gunners, felt their hearts begin to beat against their ribs, for an immense flock of brant we had watched with eager eyes for one hour rose and came straight towards our boats and decoys. By signal agreed upon we were to let eight barrels go into this flock—four barrels as they tried to light, and four as they took wing after the first four doses. You could have heard a pin drop in the bay—almost. I don't think I breathed for a space; I was so deliciously frightened. Shooting at my first buck in Tennessee was nothing to it. Bang! four times, close as two successive flashes of lightning. They rose again; but this was the crack of doom to them. Abner Doughty yelled, then dragged the smallest boat off, sculled her rapidly among the dead and dying, and gathered them in, to the number of fifteen brant. The state of the weather absolutely demanded a drink all round.

It was only a question after that of how long we could wait. Pluck sustained me, and I prayed for hunger and a good digestion to fix the rest. We did wait till four p.m., and then an appealing look from J. M. S. towards the semi-corpulent and carnivorous sheriff decided the day; and we folded our tents, gathered our ducks and brant, and paddled away. One more hour of exposure would have ended my professional and political career inside of a week. I was completely numbed, unable to lift my gun, chilled from centre to circumference.

We killed a goose on the wing on our way to the mainland, and counted the spoils of war. We had bagged 35 brant, 17 ducks, and one wild goose. We made the gunners carry the game, for Adams's stomach yearned for dinner equally with that of the writer.

We had watched the rising sun, and as we toiled home we saw it set, surrounded with "looming bastions fringed with fire;" and, as I picked up the dry leaves, half crimson and still beautiful, I

murmured the sweet lines of the German Uhland, a painting in themselves:—

"A deep and crimson streak
The dying leaves disclose;
As on consumption's waning cheek,
Mid ruin blooms the rose."

But luck had not deserted us. The honk, honk of a tremendous flock of wild geese sounded over the tree-tops as we walked homewards. Abner handed me the only loaded gun we had, and as the flock was high above the trees and straight overhead, seemingly among the clouds, I fired, and, on the oath of an honest barrister, down came, directly at my feet, the biggest goose I ever saw. [N.B.—Shall I except Alfieri when in love?] Our happiness was now complete. Nothing daunted us but the long, weary walk back to Sooy's.

Abner Doughty, with a stroke of genius, said, "Come to my cabin, and I will cook this goose." Alfieri, the sheriff, jumped for joy at the thought. We were soon there—a little frame shanty, with a good fire burning in it. To us a Mecca of the mind. Only a house on piles in the inlet, three feet above the water.

Delmonico and Welker have had some hundreds in cash out of me in gastronomic pleasures; but never did I enjoy *bibendi* or *edendi* as I did that lone goose at Abner Doughty's homely but homelike fireside.

I have ducked no more. When Alfieri suggests another trip after brant, geese, and ducks, I suggest, "Alfred, is it not a trifle cold?" Yours tenderly.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XII.—"HE IS DYING."

THOUGH much disappointed at first at this new obstacle, the young men were not discouraged, but set their brains to work to discover some means of surmounting it. Morley was for climbing the wall in some part that seemed more secluded from observation; but this idea was rejected, on account of the numbers of the enemy being so great that they would be sure to have scouts out, and they would be seen at once.

The Mohammedan, Joom, suggested that they should disguise themselves as natives, and then either slip over the wall or through the gate, professing to have come to join the sepoys' ranks. Vaughan was disposed to take this idea into consideration; but the cautious Scot negatived it decidedly.

"Na, na," he said, "that wouldna do. They would say we were spies, even if they didna find out we were Feringhees, as they ca' us. They would shute us a', I doot."

"What, then, do you propose, McAndrew?" said Morley, impatiently. "We are wasting the precious time in talking, and getting no nearer our object."

"Weel, sir, if ye'll tak' my advice, ye'll wait till it's dark before ye gang oot, and then, if we're quick,

we might be safe in among some trees before the mune is up."

"What, and waste all those hours? Vaughan, can you sit down calmly and wait for darkness, knowing that perhaps those two poor girls are calling on us for aid?"

"We are no more likely to aid them by risking our lives when we can avoid it," said Vaughan, coldly. "No, I think McAndrew is right. If we want to do any good, we must be cautious, and act as our brains, and not as our hearts, dictate."

Morley said no more, and, dreading each moment to hear that Colonel Stafford had repented, and recalled his permission, the little party separated, to meet again at Vaughan's tent at dusk.

To Vaughan and Morley, if not to the other two, those seemed the longest hours they had ever known, as they saw the daylight fade apparently more slowly than ever before, while the incessant rattle of musketry and thunder of cannon sounded in their ears.

At dusk, however, the enemy withdrew to a distance, the firing became less frequent, and gradually ceased.

As soon as it was so dark that they might hope to escape notice, the four men passed through the gate, and, led by the Mohammedan, stole softly away from the fort. His white robes fluttered a little in advance, and the others kept their eyes fixed on this faint glimmer, the two officers following directly after him, and McAndrew bringing up the rear.

"Do you think he is to be trusted, Rob?" whispered Morley.

"I do."

"He might, if he chose, lead us right into the lion's mouth. You know he wanted us to disguise and start by daylight, perhaps on purpose to put us into their hands."

"We must risk that," was the whispered reply. "I trust him, and he will be of immense value to us if he is faithful, both with regard to language and knowledge of the country. He was guide as Mrs. Harland and my sister came."

There was silence, then, as they hurried on, with Joom still some distance in advance, the young men's hearts beating painfully as every inequality in the ground, or clump of bushes, seemed to them ready to start into life and arrest their progress.

On, over the uneven ground, with eyes and ears strained to catch the faintest sight or sound that should bode ill to them, with great drops standing on their brows from the stifling heat and exertion of treading lightly, for they had left the beaten track. No word had been spoken for some time, when suddenly Vaughan laid his hand on Morley's arm, and said, in a low, hissing whisper—

"Frank, is this a trap? I am sure I see figures in advance."

They stopped, and gazed eagerly forward to where they could dimly distinguish more than one white form, and it was apparent that Joom had joined some others, and was in converse with them.

"The scoundrel!" said Morley, in the same tone. "Here he comes back to look for us. Shall we stand firm, or get out of sight among the trees?"

"Too late for that—he has seen us."

"To the right, sahibs—quick," said Joom's voice the next moment.

"What for, you villain?" hissed Morley, catching him by the throat. "That we may be cut to pieces in that cut-throat wood?"

"Let him go, Frank. Let us hear what he has to say for himself"

Morley's grasp relaxed, and, as soon as he could speak, the native said again, excitedly—

"To the right, quick. They are coming this way."

He seized the Scotch corporal by the arm and drew him along, the other two following with swords half drawn. For some distance this was kept up, and then they all came to a standstill in a grove of trees, panting and out of breath.

"Now, what does this mean?" asked Vaughan, sharply, but without raising his voice. "Who were those men you were speaking to?"

"A picket, sahib."

"A picket! They are very methodical, then. Well?"

"They thought me one of themselves. I asked where the fair mem sahibs were, which had been stolen from the hated Feringhees. They knew nothing. Missee Dora and Missee Stafford not anywhere near here."

"I beg your pardon, Joom," said Morley, "but did they not suspect you?"

"No, Sahib Morley. It too dark."

"Then you think they are certainly not amongst this lot of pandes?"

"I am sure of it, sahib."

"Shall we trust him, Vaughan?"

"Yes."

"What do you say, McAndrew?"

"Ay, troost him as far as ye're obleeged, and not any farther."

"Lead on, then, Joom; and if you betray us, I swear that you at least shall die before I do."

The fort and its assailants were left miles in the rear before the moon rose, clear and splendid, to light them on their way. There was not a soul in sight as they came out again on to the rough, irregular road, along which they had marched the night before in happy ignorance of the fact that the two girls were being snatched from their midst, as it were; and by common consent they stopped, now they were safe for the time being, to consider the best course to take.

"We had better," said Vaughan, "get 'over as much ground as we can during the cool hours. Then in the day we must halt and conceal ourselves—we three—as near a village as possible, while Joom goes and makes inquiries and obtains food."

"That makes us entirely dependent upon his faithfulness," said Morley; "but there seems no help for it. We can't make inquiries ourselves, so I suppose we must put up with it."

As a village came in sight at sunrise, they took refuge in a mango tope, and the Mohammedan left them as arranged. He returned after being gone a couple of hours, during which Vaughan and Morley had refreshed their exhausted frames by a brief

slumber, McAndrew insisting on keeping the first watch, and neither of the young men waking again before the coming of their dark-skinned companion.

As they all made a hearty breakfast off the simple fare Joom had succeeded in obtaining, Vaughan interrogated him as to the information he had gained, which was *nil*. No one in the village knew anything about the two girls; and, though professing not to have expected to get any news so easily, a bitter disappointment was visible in the faces of the young officers.

The meal concluded, and each one declaring himself ready to go on again, in spite of the heat, the native was sent out into the open to reconnoitre. As he reported that all seemed perfectly safe, the march was resumed, and they walked on through the scorching sun, getting into the shade whenever practicable, for another hour or two; when suddenly, in the distance, they became aware of a feature in the landscape which brought them to a sudden standstill.

Surely those were the white tops of tents gleaming from among that distant tope of palm trees. What could it mean? Friends or foes?

"I will go and see," said Joom. "Let the sahibs stay here in the edge of the jungle. If there is danger, they can hide."

The sahibs agreeing, he glided away, while the three left behind threw themselves down in the shade on the dried leaves, for there was no grass to speak of, and waited.

As they lay there, hot and exhausted, Vaughan's eyes returned again and again to Morley's jaded, harassed countenance, handsome still, in spite of its pallor, and the mingled dust and perspiration which disfigured it. For the first time he felt a pang of compunction.

"Perhaps I was too hard on him," he thought. "I have won my darling, and Dora does not seem to despise him. She does not seem to feel it as I expected she would."

For the time something of his old good fellowship returned; but he did not give utterance to it, though something impelled him to hold out the hand of friendship. He resisted the feeling, however, as his pride told him that it was Morley's turn now, and he might refuse to take it.

"Not yet," he said to himself. "I will wait awhile, and see how things turn out."

McAndrew rose, and, stepping out into the sunlight, looked long and earnestly towards the tents, his face gradually assuming an expression of blank dismay.

"Gude presairve us, Captain Morley, it's a regiment of sepoys, an' they're a' coming oot. That double-faced idol worshipper has betrayed us."

Vaughan and Morley started up, and could make out a large party of sepoys rapidly assembling and advancing in their direction, not with the order and regularity which would have characterized an English regiment of foot, but apparently all in confusion.

"Back!" cried Vaughan, setting the example. "They will never find us in this wild jungle. McAndrew is right, and our confidence was misplaced."

They hurried, as fast as the dense undergrowth would permit them, far into the deep recesses of the forest, stopping at last, breathless, to listen. Not a sound was to be heard save the humming of tropical insects and the cries of different birds.

"The villain," said Morley. "I remember now his peculiar calm smile when we hesitated as to whether to trust him. Fools that we were, to put faith in any one of his complexion. Listen!"

No sound followed his exclamation, and they began to feel safe again; for it did not seem probable that the pursuit would be carried far into the wood; and deciding to remain there until dusk, when they would try and retrace their steps, they prepared themselves for another long night walk by a good sleep.

They took it in turns to watch, and, worn out as they were, slumber visited them willingly, in spite of their anxiety and the discomforts of their position. As the heat began sensibly to diminish, and no pursuit had apparently been attempted, Vaughan roused Morley, who was still sleeping profoundly, and suggested that they should waste no more time. The remains of the food Joom had procured was hastily partaken of, washed down by a drink from the flasks with which all three had wisely provided themselves, and they started to find their way back to the rough track across the open country.

With ears attent, they pressed cautiously forward, more than once stopping to listen, as excited fancy caused them to imagine they heard voices; but each time so complete a silence ensued that they were encouraged to go on once more.

A glimmer of dim light through the trees told them they were right in the direction they had taken, and that they would soon be clear of the jungle. Their fears were vanishing, when a sudden rustling among the bushes to their right made each man's hand seek the hilt of his sword, as they stopped and held their breath.

"I see a bit of white through there," whispered Vaughan. "It is a native, and he has seen us."

"Hush, listen!"

Morley held up his hand, and they heard what sounded like a deep groan.

Vaughan hesitated no longer, but dashed forward, and parted the bushes, to find the form of a native lying, face downwards, on the ground, his white clothing drenched with blood.

The young man turned him over, to see the familiar features of the Mohammedan.

"He is dying," said Morley, stooping over him to pour a little brandy between his lips. "Good heavens! The poor wretch is cut to pieces almost. Look here."

Vaughan shuddered, and set his teeth hard; for even he, who had been through horrible scenes enough in the Crimean war, felt a faint, sick feeling stealing over him as he looked on the terrible wounds the native had received.

The brandy soon took effect, and the eyes of the injured man were opened, to fall vacantly at first, and then with recognition, upon the faces of those who bent over him, showing dimly in the brief twilight.

They were in a little open space, and the calm

evening sky was visible overhead, with one pale star faintly twinkling, as though but just lighted.

"Safe now," said Joom, faintly. "They are gone—all. They thought me dead—left—sahib."

His eyes closed again, and Morley hastened to pour a little more brandy down his throat, which revived him.

"Look for sahib captains—all day," gasped the poor fellow, his voice growing gradually fainter, so that the young men had some difficulty in catching his words. Suddenly he half raised himself, and whispered, excitedly—

"Missee Dora—save her—Bagra—Jhod Rao—ah!"

The words ended in a groan, and he fell back again, while Vaughan, terribly agitated, endeavoured to get him to say more. Morley, equally moved, tried to induce him to swallow more brandy, but in vain. As he seemed trying to speak, both bent down to catch the words breathed in a gasping sigh.

"Bagra—missee—"

"He is dead, Frank." And Vaughan laid poor Joom's head gently down and rose to his feet.

"Ye'd better e'en just tak' some brandy yersel'," said McAndrew, approaching him, "or perhaps a sloop o' my whiskey wouldna hurt ye."

"No, no," said Vaughan, waving aside the corporal's proffered flask. "Morley, you heard that?"

Morley, who looked ghastly in the dim light, merely nodded.

"It is plain enough. He heard where they were before he was set upon. Poor fellow, how we misjudged him! He has actually been dragging himself about in that condition to tell us his news. With Jhod Rao! Oh, my poor girl, it is too horrible!"

He covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud. After a minute, however, he resumed his calmness by a great effort, and turned to Morley—

"We must lose no time. Darkness is our best friend. We must hurry on to Bagra at once."

Morley knelt down and felt the heart of the Mohammedan, to make certain that life was quite extinct. There was no room for doubt, and he rose directly, to take a long pull at his flask.

"Come," said Vaughan; "for heaven's sake, don't let us delay. Are you ready?"

Without a word Morley followed him, McAndrew keeping by his side, and glancing at him anxiously from time to time.

"The laddie looks like a ghaist," he muttered to himself. "We've lost one of the number, and he'll be the next to break down, I doot."

CHAPTER XIII.—"POOR MOTHER."

THE next few days were never after very clearly defined in the memories of the three wanderers. One was exactly like another. By night, walking steadily forward along a rough, uneven road, diversified at intervals by a camping ground, where every vestige of herbage was worn away—for troops or infantry regiments always encamped on the same ground as their predecessors; by day, resting in the shadiest and most concealed places to be found, so as to be ready in the evening to go on again.

In the evenings and early mornings they would stop at some Hindoo village for food, for the inhabitants of these, though not too amiably disposed towards their European conquerors, were yet peaceful and simple people, inoffensive at present, and not likely to join in the rebellion till forced into it.

However, this long, seemingly interminable road came to an end at last, and the glaring white walls of Bagra burst upon the eyes of the travellers early one morning, just as the heat was becoming too great for walking.

As yet no insurrection had broken out at this town, though many of the English inhabitants felt serious misgivings, as they heard of the horrors being perpetrated in different parts of the country, and saw—what they had never thought much of before—how small was their number in proportion to that of the original population.

General Carnley, whose brigade of native regiments garrisoned the town, was well-known to Morley, and after a brief consultation it was decided to seek him, and, putting the case before him, ask his advice. Accordingly they bent their steps towards his residence.

The general, who was a well-built, soldierly-looking man of about fifty, with a florid complexion and fierce bristly white hair, opened his eyes till the white was visible above and below the iris, at the sight of his visitors.

"I was never more surprised," he said, when Morley had introduced his companions; "but before you tell me what brings you, you must have something to eat and a glass of wine. I hope nothing is wrong, though. You left Stafford—"

"Oh, yes," said Morley, "he's all right. Ours is at Chutnegunj, helping in the defence; but there is no fear of that being taken—at present."

Refreshment, in the shape of an early tiffin, was placed before the travellers, the general making a pretence of joining them. For a time nothing was said as to the reason of their appearance at Bagra; but at last their host's patience was exhausted, and he asked, giving a twirl to his heavy, white moustache—

"And now, what has happened to bring you so far? You have never come right across the country alone?"

"We have, though," said Morley, laconically.

"With what object?"

"We—the colonel—there, you tell him, Vaughan. I'm as hoarse as a crow with these nights in the open air."

"Ye see, sir," said McAndrew, as Vaughan hesitated, "the colonel's daughter, and Captain Vaughan there, his sister, ha'e been speerited awa', and we ha'e reason to believe they were brought here."

"Yes, that is it, sir," said Vaughan, whose momentary hesitation was gone directly. "Do you know a man named Jhod Rao?"

"Very well. What of him?"

"We suspect him to have had a hand in their disappearance."

"Him! Why, my dear fellow, he is the last man to do anything of the kind. Only yesterday he called on me to assure me of his support should anything go wrong here. Oh, you must be mistaken."

"No," said Morley, slowly. "Vaughan was wrong to say suspect. We know it. Miss Vaughan had the misfortune to attract his attention in passing through here on her way to join us. He followed her, and made one attempt to carry her off, which had very nearly succeeded, when she was rescued by some of our men. A little later she and another lady disappear. Naturally, our suspicions point to him. Since we started in search of them, a faithful native who accompanied us, trusting to his nationality to protect him, ventured amongst a regiment of sepoys encamped on the plains, to try and gather what had become of the ladies. He contrived to rejoin us, half dead from wounds inflicted by those brutes, and told us, while dying, to follow Rao to Bagra, and save them from him."

"Poor wretch! But Jhod Rao has only been in the town a couple of days," said the general, thoughtfully.

"Of course not; he could not well be here sooner. Now, what is your advice? Shall we try by cunning to find out their whereabouts, or go boldly and demand that they shall be given up to us?"

"H'm, ha. Well, suppose I send one of the servants to find out whether they are in his house."

"And to tell him that we are seeking them," said Vaughan, impatiently, "so that he can have them conveyed away. No, thank you, General Carnley, I can suggest a much better plan. Let us have a party of your most trustworthy men to back us up. Morley and I go first, and ask for them to be given up. If he refuses, then let your men surround the place, and help us to search it thoroughly."

"Stop, stop," said the general, twirling his moustache, nervously. "You young men are so rash. Now, by such a proceeding we should irretrievably offend a man who has a great deal of influence, and who has just expressed his goodwill towards us."

Morley rose from the table.

"I half hoped you would assist us, for old friendship's sake, general; but if you will not—many thanks for your hospitality, and—come, Vaughan. Are you ready, McAndrew?"

"Wait a minute," said the general, with an injured air. "You are in such a hurry. I didn't want to go out, because I am sure to catch cold; I always do when I exert myself in this heat. Here," he said to a servant, "go and tell Lieutenant O'Hara to assemble his company, and come up here. Dear me," he muttered to himself, "I must have an attack of bronchitis coming. I am quite husky."

Vaughan cast a half-contemptuous glance at Morley, who replied to it in a whisper, unobserved by the general.

"I spoke like that on purpose to fetch him. I knew well enough he would come round. He's a capital fellow when you know him."

His auditor looked by no means convinced of this, but said nothing, and went out to look if the men who had been sent for were in sight. MacAndrew followed him, after a minute.

"I am afraid we shall all have colds after this, Morley," said the general, in a melancholy tone. "The heat is fearful at this part of the day. But I see you are bent on losing no time."

"Too much has been lost already," said Morley,

with a pained look from the window at Vaughan, who stood outside.

"My dear boy, I sympathize with you. It is plain to see how matters stand, for you are evidently as deeply interested in this as your friend. You are engaged to his sister, I suppose."

Morley coloured, and half turned away.

"No, I am not," he said, in a low voice.

"Then it is the other one, eh, Frank?" asked the general, with a sly look.

"Confound it, sir!" burst out Morley, angrily; "will you let me and my affairs alone?"

The older man looked so amazed that Morley cooled down at once.

"I beg your pardon," he said, more calmly. "I am worried and worn out, or I should not have lost my temper so easily. No; I am not engaged to either young lady, nor likely to be."

"It's all right," said the general, good-naturedly. "I don't take offence so easily as I take cold, fortunately. There, come along. I go with you, of course."

A few minutes longer, and they were threading the intricate streets of the town, on their way to Rao's residence. Lieutenant O'Hara, who had struck up an acquaintance with Vaughan on the spot, took the greatest interest in the affair, and was ready to devote himself to their service with all the enthusiasm of a son of Erin.

"Ah, my dear boy," said the general, as he walked by Morley's side, "let me give you a piece of advice. Don't be an old bachelor like me. Marry some nice, sensible English girl, who'll take care of you, and make life as sweet again."

The young man frowned, and set his teeth, as though in bodily pain; but it was unnoticed.

"I may do it yet," said his companion, complacently. "There is plenty of time. Many men marry after they are sixty."

As he received no reply, he relapsed into silence; and little more was said until, at the end of a street, an imposing-looking house was pointed out as that of Jhod Rao.

Vaughan felt his blood boil with rage as the bland, smiling Hindoo, accompanied by a large number of attendants, came out to meet his visitors.

"Don't offend him, if you can help it," said the general, aside, first to one and then to the other of the young men, neither of whom paid much heed to the request, as every pulse was quickened at the thought that those dearest in the world were concealed somewhere in this building.

Refusing the invitation to enter, Vaughan spoke out firmly—

"We have come to demand the restoration of the two English ladies whom you have brought here against their will."

Rao's small, sharp eyes assumed a look of extreme surprise.

"It is a mistake," he said, in Hindustani, with which both Vaughan and Morley were sufficiently acquainted to comprehend him. "I have no English ladies."

"You hear that," said the general, hastily. "We had better take his word, and go back."

"It is false," said Vaughan. "I know that they

are here. Will you give them up, or must we take them by force?"

"I know nothing of them," said Rao, his thick, sensual lips curving into a scornful smile. "My house is open. Enter, and look for yourselves."

A thorough and careful search ensued, O'Hara joining in it eagerly, no part of the house being left unexamined. Even the zenana was entered, and the eyes of the seekers wandered over its occupants, whose black orbs only were visible.

At last they emerged, to stand outside once more in the blinding glare, the two young men looking stunned and bewildered.

"It is no use standing here," said the general. "Give the word, O'Hara. It is madness standing out here, after getting into such a violent perspiration. Be a man," he said to Morley, as the men moved on, with them following. "You both look completely crushed and hopeless, instead of setting your brains to work to guess where they can be."

"The general's right," said O'Hara. "Cheer up; never say die. They're not there; so much the better. You surely didn't want them to be?"

Morley tried to shake off the dull feeling of despair which had come over him, and was about to reply, when there was a sudden rattle of musketry, and a bullet or two whizzed by them.

"Great heaven!" exclaimed the general. "What's that?"

Looking back, the street through which they were passing was seen to be filling rapidly with sepoy, who were hurrying in pursuit.

"We shall be cut to pieces. Forward, my men, and let's get into an open part where we can defend ourselves. Morley, the faggots were ready piled, and we have applied the torch ourselves. Jhod Rao has instigated this, I dare swear."

Shots continued to pelt after them, as they went down the street at a double, during which Morley managed to get to Vaughan's side.

"Rob," he said, in a low voice, "if these men were to turn against us, it would only be a question of how many we could cut down before we fell. Our lives depend on the faithfulness of this band of sepoys."

"We will sell them dearly, old fellow," said Vaughan. "Frank, if I fall and you survive, you will devote yourself to finding those poor girls?"

"As faithfully as you will if it's the other way on."

The next minute they were in an open square, the men were faced round, and the fire of the pursuers returned, to check their advance for a minute only, when they came on again.

A sharp struggle ensued, the numbers of the enemy gradually increasing instead of diminishing, while the little party, defending themselves desperately, retreated towards the general's house, leaving man after man wounded or dead in the road. They had nearly reached this haven of safety, when a sepoy captain made a sudden dash forward, and aimed a cut at Vaughan, which threatened to be fatal.

O'Hara, however, saw it as it was descending. There was a flash of steel, and the arm of the subadar fell useless to his side. But the act placed

the young lieutenant at a disadvantage, and, before he could recover himself sufficiently to avoid it, he received a thrust from a bayonet, groaned, and sank to the ground. Vaughan sprang to his side, and, aided by one of their own sepoys, lifted him to his feet, and, thus supporting him on either side, continued the retreat.

What followed was so confused that Vaughan never afterwards could recollect how it happened that he found himself safely inside the courtyard of the general's house with the rest, the gates being closed, and a sharp firing kept up through hastily contrived loopholes.

They bore O'Hara into the house, and laid him on a bed. Very few of the wounded had been carried in, but the lieutenant was the only European who had fallen, which was a great consolation to the general.

As no surgeon was obtainable, Vaughan did his best to staunch the blood; but it needed no doctor to tell him the wound was fatal.

O'Hara opened his eyes, and half smiled. His lips moved, and Vaughan leaned down to listen.

"Poor mother!"

That was all; but the young man, as he heard, felt his eyes fill with tears.

The lieutenant gave a long, shuddering sigh, and lay still; and when Vaughan laid his hand on his heart all pulsation had ceased for ever.

"Poor mother!" thought Vaughan. "Aye, God help her, and all poor mothers in this fearful time!"

Morley knew nothing of this, for he had been with the general, who had been fighting with a cool courage and disregard of danger that had taken him somewhat by surprise.

"Ah, Frank, my boy," he said, mopping his face when the gates were closed and the disappointment of their pursuers was venting itself in a few scattered shots, "I haven't been so warm for a long time. I must really go and put my feet in hot water, or I shall take my death of cold."

Morley looked at him grimly, but could not smile under the circumstances.

"You had better go, then, general," he said, "for you will have plenty of chance of getting killed, without doing it that way."

"I shall just go and look after my wounded first, poor fellows! I wish to heaven I had any idea how many regiments will be faithful, for if many of them turn against us, we shall not have the ghost of a chance for our lives but in flight."

"A Howling Wilderness."

IT was autumn. I had always been wild to go to the primeval seclusion of the wilderness. When a boy, I used to speak whole chapters of Murray's Guide, and I read the accounts of those early surveyors who could not plant their tripods without danger of striking a bear's toe; but never until this year were the bright dreams of my youth realized. An article in a paper, stating that bears were so plentiful that it was almost impossible to keep pumpkin-pies for a day, and that they were frequently discovered up the grape vines before breakfast—I mean the bears—so crazed me that the next

day found Don Albani and me in an Adirondack stage, starting for "the wilds where never man trod." My chum was dressed in a delicate maroon velvet jacket, with point-lace collar. Inside and out of his coat were a hundred or more labelled pockets. Some held cartridges, others essence of peppermint, and curiosities in general, such as a whale's tooth, and the scalp of an Indian—which he alleged he took. This latter he always showed to the driver when the vehicle became excessively protracted in its momentum.

It was a wild ride. I do not mean that the speed was great, except at one time, when an irate steer charged us, and stuck his horns through the back-board, pushing us up the hill at a rate never equalled before or again by that stage. Albani cut off the steer's head, and we preserved it as a memento; but, you will hardly believe me, his rage was so great that for two miles he followed us without any head. At the first bend of the road, however, in his blind fury he kept straight on into the ironworks, and was melted up into pig iron, horse nails, and other useful articles.

Our expectations of the woods were greatly disappointed when we found the persistence with which rail-fences and houses clung to the side of the road. Then, too, the telegraph poles never gave out, and the wires were in no place down. The natives, who regarded us in the light of Arctic adventurers or religious fanatics, thronged the sides of the road, and exclaimed, "I reckon you'll git a leetle spruced down afore you come out," and other annoying words. The horses usually walked a mile or two, and then paused to recover breath. Sometime our stop was at a prehistoric hotel or post-office. At others by the side of a pearly trout brook, where the water literally boiled with—the horses. No trout seen there for fifteen years. As I said before, the crowds became so annoying at the hamlets that we were obliged to lecture on temperance in order to rid ourselves. It is the only thing that makes them move.

We stopped for dinner at what was called a hotel, and were regaled on what we at first supposed to be venison, but which proved to be woodchuck. The proprietor said there was "good shootin' off 'em," and tried to induce us to stay; but woodchuck had no charms at four dollars a day. It was with a sense of oppression that we entered the "coach," and the driver commenced his afternoon performance of breaking forty clothes poles on the horses' backs in two consecutive hours without sleep. For twenty miles we sat silent, too full to speak—full of gloomy forebodings, I mean—except the driver, who had drunk whiskey without a licence at this temperance hotel. We passed Catamount Mountain and Panther Gorge, in which a herd of swine were quietly feeding. In vain we looked for the wilderness. The rail fence still pursued us, and towards the latter part of the journey we were annoyed by pedlars selling lavender neckties and gum. We saw no hand-organ grinders, however, and took courage. At last we came to a place where there was no fence, and a sigh of relief broke from our imprisoned souls. Then a river, on its smooth surface myriads of water fowl—all belonging to Bill Spooner.

Darkness was coming on, and we were starving. The driver offered some spruce gum, unprotected, from the lower abysses of his pocket; but we thanked him, saying, "Oh, kind sir, dear sir, save yourself! You are of value to the community. You drive a stage, carry the mail, and help your fellow-creatures. Take the gum yourself, and live! We are nothing but bears from Wall-street." He only smiled as the glow of the hotel lights broke upon us. We were sorry afterwards that we did not take the gum, as several of the greatest hunters in the woods had chewed that piece, and it was of historic interest.

We were in the wilderness. It was a very civilized sort of a place. From the grand piano were issuing soft symphonies, and gentlemen, whom we were informed were guides, dressed in swallow-tails, were entertaining the ladies with hunting adventures. It seemed hardly possible that those delicate creatures were guides, and could row a man five miles a day.

We asked the proprietor how many deer he had seen that day, and if the piano did not frighten them. Albani and I fairly leaped for joy when he said the deer rather "liked the pianner, and often poked their heads in the window of an evenin'." He also told us that a bear was roosting up a tree not half a mile distant, and that they had a hook and line out for him. The method is this: A clothes-line, of from a mile to a mile and a quarter in length, has a shank hook at one end baited with a freshly killed cur—the bears are such curious fellows; this is then carried its full length by a man, assisted by another with a cane to keep panthers from seizing the bait. On their return, all the boarders seize the unbaited end and anxiously await a bite. The bite of a bear is quite similar to that of a pickerel, only more so. At the first nibble the boarders all twist their limbs around the stove and other immovable objects, and suspense reigns supreme. A quick pull announces that he has swallowed the pup, and at a given signal all pull in. Of course several trees always hang to the bear, and many ferns. The ladies then gather the autumn leaves and press the ferns, and the bear is converted into grease and other useful articles.

If the bear is not dead by the time he reaches the hotel, the children stick pins into him, and poke his tongue until he faints. No bear bit before tea, and we repaired to the table to vindicate the reputation of our respective families. Since the law prohibited trout-fishing then, we were served with what were called "canned trout," so nicely preserved that the man who caught them (the day before) would not have believed them the same fish. They were a little dangerous, however, as they had been shot on the runways, and the sharp pellets of shot stuck in our throats, making it necessary to swallow chestnut burrs and other articles of furniture in order to scrape them down.

That night the lake was convulsed by a terrible storm. The hotel rocked like a lighthouse, and many were sea-sick. Lemons could not be had for love or money, and the water came into the parlours so suddenly that a party of two young gentlemen and two ladies had to take refuge on the piano. They were finally rescued in boats. By the pale glare of the lamps large trout could be seen swimming around over the first floor, and it was confidently

expected that there would be good fishing in the dining-room for a week. Imagine our surprise the next morning to find the entire establishment as dry as if there never had been a flood. Of course the deluge was the prevailing subject of conversation, and it was generally believed to be one of the faults of President Hayes in not attending to the weather.

After breakfast, Albani took his eight-ounce rod and prepared to fish from the piazza. There was a look of calm indifference on his face as he slowly drew out a quarter of a mile of line, and fastened a nice croton bug to the end of it. The boarders *en masse* came out to see him, and predicted his utter failure. They did not know their man. A member of the International Scientific Protective Benevolent Game Association advanced, and warned Albani not to fish out of season, but on his promising to put the fish right back he was allowed to proceed. He looked noble as he surveyed the surging mass of spectators. I trembled for him, and whispered, "Do take in 200 yards, just for my sake, Al!" He only smiled. Slowly he untangled the line, and threw straight up. The delicate cord ascended, the croton bug kicking. No sooner had it reached its apex than with the speed of lightning Albani gave a switch, and it sped over the house, chimney, pastures, and far away. Then the crowd cried, "It's coming back, boys. Phew!"

The loud whistle of the line, like an ærolite or æolian harp, announced its return. The friction with the air had set the bug on fire, and only a flame of glaring light marked its place. It came back, and sped across the lake its full length, amid the cheers of the dumfounded crowd. But stay! what new wonder awaits us? Lo! the hook has lit in a tree, and snatched the wary black duck from his roost. Another cheer. Albani grasps the reel, and the duck comes skipping across. He has wrung his neck. Amid the applause the piazza fell, which increased our bill materially. Again Albani steps forth and draws the line. This time he used a short cord. Whizz it goes back; but alas! the falling of the piazza had made Albani nervous, and the cruel line went swooping into one of the rooms, and returned bearing on its point a lady's switch. "Another misplaced switch," the crowd cried, and screams came from the apartment, "It's all I had in this world," but the switch had sunk never to rise again. To make a long story short, a horse had to be killed that day for his tail, and with this temporary substitute she returned to New York for repairs. The horse's hide was then made into buckskin gloves and other useful articles for us.

We remained just two days more. On the first we ascended a mountain called Marcy, from which the guide said we could see the Mississippi River. We examined it carefully with a glass, however, and pronounced the water too clear for that river; it was more likely some one of the many streams which flow from the Rocky Mountains. We saw the tired workmen return at night with their dinner pails across the East River Bridge, and then we came back to the lower regions ennobled and refreshed. The next day Albani and I each killed one-fifth of a deer. The way it happened was this: The whole Adirondack region was out after that day, and five

men fired at once, there being no reason to suspect that one man killed the deer any more than the other four. She was a doe. Does have no horns; they "take after" their mothers. For lack of other relics we brought the steer's horns away with us, and as bad luck would have it, met the owner on our return trip. He fired two shots. Twenty-seven lodged in Albani, and seventeen in your humble servant, odd numbers both of them—they felt odd. We are now busy picking them out.

An Arcaded Street in London.

FEW Londoners (says the *Globe*) will hold that Regent-street, the chief thoroughfare in the richest quarter of the wealthiest city in the world, is what it ought to be in all respects; and any scheme for its improvement, therefore, deserves consideration. There is one now on foot, we understand, which at first sight appears more of a dream than a practical project. The promoters have it in their minds to cover the whole street with a glass roof, stretching above the eaves of the houses on either side, thus affording complete protection from rain, while at the same time ensuring good ventilation.

After dark the huge arcade would be illuminated by electric sunlights, placed at regular intervals along the centre of the arch, thereby diffusing a more pleasant and equal light than under ordinary circumstances. One of the greatest defects of Regent-street at present is its macadam pavement, which in wet weather produces seas of slush, and in dry clouds of dust. This also would, therefore, be taken in hand for improvement, the object sought being the substitution of some form of pavement which shall be noiseless, clean, safe for horses, and not so liable to fall out of repair.

With a view to render unnecessary the constant breaking-up of the street, which is such a nuisance under present circumstances, the gas and water pipes would be carried up to the roof, where they could be repaired without difficulty. Such are the salient features of the scheme: what would it cost to carry out? A comparatively small sum, it is said, owing to the cheapness of glass and iron. If this be true, the residents might well consider whether the trading advantages accruing to them from rendering Regent-street the finest thoroughfare in Europe would not more than compensate for the increase of rental.

During such wet weather as London has been experiencing lately, most shopkeepers in the street must have experienced a notable diminution in their receipts, while during dry times their goods suffer great deterioration from dust. These evils would be largely remedied by the proposed arrangements, and it is safe to predict that a great many more people would flock to Regent-street for shopping purposes than under present circumstances. There are many other advantages held out by the projectors, but the above will suffice to give a notion of the grandeur of their central idea. Almost too grand, we fear, for the average British mind to soar to, and, perhaps, rather too near akin to many past projects which were admirable in every respect except practicability.



Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XLV.—SAM OAKUM'S NARRATIVE.



IN the morning reg'lar Lauré used to take two of the chaps down below to Mr. Meldon, and he used to doctor their wounds for them, as I used to hear; for, seeing they never felt disposed to trust me near the prisoners, 'cept

at diving times, I used to hang away, and never attempt to go near; but I kept on sending a line now and then by the little bird, telling them that I was making my plans, and that they were to wait a bit. I used to tell them too to feed the linnet; and it got to be so at last, that if I wanted it to take a message, all I had to do was to take away its seed and water over-night, and let it loose at daybreak, and it would go as straight as possible to the broken skylight, flit down, and come back in about ten minutes.

I know it must have been a disappointment often to them below; but then I daren't often be sending notes, for fear of being noticed. Then, too, I was puzzled a deal about things: I wanted to know what I ought to do for the best. Try and seize a boat, and get them aboard, or to get the upper hand when there was only the watch on deck.

This last seemed the most likely way; for going afloat in an open boat, with the chance of being picked up, is queer work, and the sort of thing that, when a man has tried once, he is well satisfied not to try again. So being, as it were, head man, I settled that we'd seize the ship; and after talking it over, the first chance I had, with Rolls and Lennie,

they quite agreed, thinking about salvage, you see; and then I began to reckon up the stuff I'd got to work with.

To begin with, there was Mr. Pugh, who was as good as two; so I put him down in my own mind two. Skipper two, Mr. Parkley two, and Mr. Meldon two.

Then, going on with my best men, there was Rolls, who was also good for two, if he was only put in the right way.

Then Lennie, who hadn't quite got his strength again; so I put him at one and a half.

Next came Wilson, who was right enough, no doubt, in his way; only being so long and wankle (weak, sickly), I couldn't help thinking he'd be like a knife I used to have—out and out bit of stuff, but weak in the spring; and just when you're going to use it for something particular, it would shut up, or else double backwards. That's just what I expected he would do—double up somewhere; so I dursn't only put him down at half a one.

Then there was the chap who cried. He showed fight a bit in the scrimmage; but I hadn't much faith in him; there was too much water in him for strength; so I dursn't put him down neither for more than half. While as for Mr. Studwick, poor chap, and his sister, and Mrs. Pugh, they were worse than noughts, being like in one's way. So you see that altogether I had to depend on five twos was ten, and one and a half was 'leven and a half, and a half made twelve; and another half, which I put to balance the two noughts to the bad, making, all told, what I reckoned as twelve, and myself thrown into the bargain.

And now came the question: How was we good men and true at a disadvantage to get the better of they? I turned it over all sorts of ways. Once I thought I'd get the doctor to p'ison the lot, only it seemed so un-English like, even if the others were mutineers and pirates, while most likely they wouldn't have taken the p'ison if we'd wanted them to. P'ison 'em with rum, so that they couldn't move, might be managed, perhaps, with some of 'em, if the stuff was laid in their way; and that might answer, if a better plan couldn't be thought of. To go right at them without a stratagem would have been, of course, madness, though Rasp was for that when I talked to him, saying, thinking wasn't no use, and all we had to do was to get first fire at 'em twice, and shoot a lot, when we could polish off the other five easy. Now, that sounded all very nice; but I was afraid it wouldn't work; so I gave it up, and asked Rolls his opinion; but he said he hadn't none.

I'd have given something to have had a long palaver with Mr. Pugh or the skipper; for I think we might have knocked up something between us

that would have kep' out water. But a talk with him being out of the question, I had to think it out myself, for Rasp hadn't much head, 'cept for diving; and all I could come at was, that the best thing would be to leave a bottle or two of rum where the watch could find it; and then, if we could shut down the hatches on the others, we might do some good. That seemed the simplest dodge I could get hold of; for it looked to me as if the more one tried to work out something fresh, the more one couldn't.

I watched my chance, and wrote out all my plan, and started it to Mr. Pugh; and this time I contrived, when no one was looking, to drop my letter down the skylight, telling him that he was to send me an answer by the bird, writ big, so as I shouldn't make no mistakes in the reading of it. Next morning, as soon as I was on deck, I found that I was too late; for Lauré and a couple of the chaps were hunting the bird about; while, as it flitted from side to side of the deck, you could see a bit of white paper tied under its wing, and it must have been that as set them on after it.

I knew well enough that if the bird was caught it would be all over with my scheme, and p'raps with me; so I went at it with the others, trying to catch the little thing, contriving, though, to frighten it all I could, so that it flew up into the rigging; and being nearest at the time, I followed it out on to the main-yard.

"Be careful, Oakum," says Lauré, as I went cautiously out till I was right over the water, the canary going right off to the end; but I got my feet in the stirrups and followed on, expecting to see it flit off to another part of the rigging. I'd made up my mind what to do if I could get at it; for, though I liked the pretty little thing, there was a wonderful deal depending on whether it was caught or not; while all the time I was abusing myself for not being on deck sooner. I'd let the bird's cage be open the night before, ready for it to get out; and now it was plain that it had been down to the cabin, and Mr. Pugh had sent me an answer.

But it was no use to grumble; there was the bird before me, and if it would only keep still for another half-minute, I thought I saw my way clear. Plenty were now watching me from below; and, fortunately for me, instead of flitting off, the little bird crouched down upon the yard-arm; so that, creeping nearer and nearer, I got quite within reach, when, making a dash as it were to catch it, I knocked the poor little thing stunned into the sea, making a sham slip at the same time, and hanging by my hands.

"Yah-h-h! you clumsy villain!" roared Lauré; and then to one or two about him—"Lower the boat, and pick up that bird."

"Lost, after all," I growled to myself; when suddenly there was a splash, a fish rose, the poor little thing was sucked into a pair of big jaws; but we were safe.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"IT is more than I dared to hope for," said Dutch, as they stood clustered round a lantern placed upon the deck, "for it was a bitter struggle."

"Bitter indeed," said Mr. Parkley, with a sigh.

"I little thought our silver was going to be so stained with blood."

"It may be all washed off yet," said John Studwick, who was stand by, looking ghastly pale.

"What do you mean?" said his father.

"That you have not got it home yet," was the reply; "and will not while that scoundrel is on board."

"Then he shall not stay on board long," exclaimed the captain, angrily. "There is the land, and a boat shall take him, and all he likes to claim as his followers, as soon as morning dawns."

Hester shuddered as she crept close to her husband, and felt as if she could never cease to fear so long as the villain was at large; but his words comforted her, and for the rest of the night long, careful watch was kept, and not without need, for several attempts were made by those below to force their way on deck.

Morning came, though, at last, as bright and sunny as if man never troubled the earth with his struggles, and as the sun arose the extent of the past night's troubles were more clearly seen; for the doctor's account showed that of their own party four had rather serious wounds, while two of the enemy lay dead, having succumbed to their injuries during the night.

To get rid of the dangerous party below was the next thing; and at last, surrounding the fore-castle hatch, the cable was cast off, and, as soon as the opening was laid bare, Lauré darted up, sword in one hand, pistol in the other; but Dutch seized one hand, Captain Studwick the other, and he was disarmed, and roughly thrown down into the little cabin from which Hester had been rescued, and the hatch secured.

Having now no leader, the other men came sulkily on deck, and gave up their arms without a struggle, and all were ordered over the side into the boat, a plentiful supply of beef and biscuits was furnished to them, with a couple of guns and ammunition, and they were rowed ashore, to make the best of their way to any settlement they could find.

"And now for the señor," said Captain Studwick, as he returned with his well-armed party after setting Lauré's followers ashore.

"We must not let him ashore with those scoundrels," said Dutch, firmly, "or he will contrive some plot to get back with them and retake the ship."

Hester shuddered as she heard his words.

"What would you do, then?" exclaimed Mr. Parkley.

"Keep him on board until we find some place to set him ashore, a couple or three hundred miles away—anywhere away from here."

There was so much reason in Dutch's words that it was decided to follow his advice, repugnant as it was to have the villain with them in the same ship.

"And now, then," said the captain, "my motto is homeward bound; though we cannot sail with wind and tide like this."

"But we must not stay so near the land," exclaimed Mr. Parkley, glancing uneasily towards the sands, where the followers of the Cuban had been landed.

"I'm afraid we must," was the reply; "but surely

we can contrive to keep our prize, now we have got the upper hand."

The feeling that they could neither sail nor get rid of Lauré acted like some great depressing influence on board; but the matter was inevitable, for to set him ashore would have been like putting fire to gunpowder, which was safe enough left alone; so careful arrangements were made, and these being in the face of them thoroughly secure, a more satisfactory influence began to pervade the vessel, and the partners congratulated one another on the escape they had had.

As for Oakum and Rasp, they went from one to the other chuckling and enjoying the interpretation that had been placed on their behaviour; Oakum, in particular, seeming to think it the height of human enjoyment to have been thought such a scoundrel when he was straining every nerve to save his friends.

Night had fallen again, and to ensure against further surprise, Dutch, Mr. Parkley, and the captain were all on deck, well armed and watchful, meaning to keep their posts till daybreak, when the schooner was to start on the head of the tide.

Nothing more had been seen of the men set ashore, for they had plunged at once into the forest; and the Cuban was so well secured that little was to be feared from him; but, all the same, an uneasy feeling prevailed, and Dutch told himself that he should not feel satisfied till they were well at sea; and on reporting this to Mr. Parkley, that individual replied—

"Neither shall I, Dutch Pugh, nor yet when we have got the treasure safe home; for you see if that scoundrel does not go to law. What's that you say, Rasp?" he said, turning sharply, for the old man was close behind.

"Oh, don't you take no notice of me. I was only chuntering to myself. I couldn't help hearing what you said to Mr. Pugh there."

Almost contrary to their expectations, the night passed without any alarm, and at daybreak, the tide still not serving for a couple of hours, Dutch and his friends went to lie down, leaving the deck in charge of Oakum and Rasp, with instructions to call them at a specified time.

Dutch, however, felt that he could hardly have dropped asleep when a strange feeling of uneasiness came over him, and, reproaching himself for leaving the deck even now, he awoke fully, to sit up and try to get rid of the confusion which oppressed him.

For a few moments he could not tell whether he was awake, or dreaming that he was once more busy diving, for there was the clanking of the air-pump, splashing of water beside him, and heavy feet passing overhead.

But it was no dream. Hardly had the deck been placed in charge of its deputies than Rasp beckoned up Pollo and the two sailors who had been so faithful to them, and began to talk in a low voice, saying something which evidently gave them the greatest satisfaction; and Rasp softly chuckled, and rubbed his hands as he turned to Oakum.

"I don't like it," said the old fellow; "it's cowardly."

"Not it," said Rasp; "and if it is, what then? I

only mean to give him a dose of it, and if he dies, why that's his fault."

"And ours," said Oakum.

"Yah!" ejaculated Rasp. "Look here, old squeamish; that chap's a tiger, and if he get's loose, he'll be the death of all on us, won't he?"

"Devil a doubt on it," said Oakum.

"Very well, then; I've got a score to pay him off," growled Rasp; "so's them poor fellows who've got the mark of his knife on them; and, besides, I kep' him from cutting my soots to pieces on purpose to give him a taste."

"But it's like murder," said Oakum.

"It was like murder for him to cut that there chube when the best diver in England was down; and now we'll see how he likes it."

"What, and cut the toob?" said Oakum, with a look of horror on his honest face.

"Not I. I'll only send the warmint down, and give him a quarter of an hour, that's all."

Oakum gave way, and felt a grim kind of satisfaction in helping to bring the Cuban on deck, where, in spite of his struggles, he was forced to assume one of the diving suits, and, almost before he knew it, the helmet was thrust over his head and secured, making him a complete prisoner, at the mercy of his tormentors.

"Now let the sharks have a go at him if they like," said Rasp, as he forced the prisoner to the side. "I've a good mind not to give him a safety line; but there, I won't be shabby."

As he spoke he secured the rope to the Cuban's waist, and then, as he fully realized that they were going to send him overboard, Lauré made a desperate struggle to free himself, but all in vain. There were five to one; the gangway was open, and, acting all together, Lauré was forced to the side, and fell backwards into the sea with a sullen plunge.

CHAPTER XLVII.—"GOOD-BYE."

RASP had placed a man at the pump, and a supply of air was being kept up, a supply now augmented by another man being sent to help turn the wheel; while, with a grim look of satisfaction, Rasp took hold of the life-line and tightened it a little, to feel the unwilling diver's movements.

"He'll be pulling hard directly," chuckled the old fellow. "Only let him see a shark—one of his first cousins—a villain. Wonder what Mr. Dutch 'll say when he knows how we've been serving out the scoundrel as—"

"What does all this mean?" exclaimed Dutch, coming so suddenly upon the group that they started asunder, and the air-pump stopped.

"Only giving that rascal a lesson in diving," growled Rasp.

"Whom? What do you mean? You surely don't mean to say that Lauré, the prisoner—"

"They're on'y having a lark with him, sir," said Oakum.

"Quick, there! Pump, you scoundrels!" exclaimed Dutch; and the wheel spun round once more. "Rasp, Oakum, pull here! You dogs, if mischief has befallen that man, I can never forgive you."

Setting the example, he hauled upon the life-line; and, Pollo running to his help, the Cuban was

dragged to the surface, and lay motionless on the deck as Dutch freed him of his helmet, and exposed his blue face.

"Quick! Call up Mr. Meldon," cried Dutch; but that gentleman was already on deck, and, to the great relief of Dutch, declared the Cuban to be still alive.

It had been a narrow escape for him, as, between dread and the want of air, another few seconds would have sufficed to finish his career. As it was, quite an hour escaped before he recognized those who had worked hard to restore him, and then it was with a malignant grin of disappointed malice.

"He'll do now," said the doctor; and, as the patient seemed disposed to sleep, they left him—Oakum, who was exceedingly penitent for the part he had taken, being stationed as sentry at the door.

Meanwhile, Captain Studwick had taken advantage of the breeze and tide, and the schooner was once more under way, threading her course amongst the rocks, and gradually leaving the cocoa-fringed strand behind.

Every one was on deck watching the receding shores, and in full expectation of some new danger springing up to hinder their homeward journey; for with the treasure they had on board, it was determined to tempt fortune no more, but to make all speed across the Atlantic as soon as they had cleared the inland sea.

Favourable winds sped the schooner at a rapid rate through the water, and all seemed so peaceful and happy that it raised a feeling of dread in those who had found the other portion of the voyage so rife with peril. Rasp shook his head, and said that they were not safe home yet, while Oakum was away; but as soon as Oakum began to croak and prognosticate evil, he changed his tone, and declared that they would soon be safely home.

The voyage home to Hester and Bessy seemed like a glimpse of Heaven, for Hester was ever by the latter's side, striving hard to make her forget the past, and revelling in her loving, grateful looks; while Bessy, though no words passed, knew that Meldon loved her with all his heart; though for her sake, and lest he should arouse the jealous susceptibilities of her brother, he maintained silence. But she knew that the day must come when he would speak, and her heart leaped with joy as she saw his patient assiduity in attending to her brother, who now turned daily more and more towards him, and sought his help.

But the presence of two sick men was not without its influence on the little crew of the ship, and Captain Studwick looked with nervous dread for what he saw must come ere long, and felt that the events might again be looked upon as an ill omen.

For though Mr. Meldon said it not in so many words, he gave him fully to understand that poor John Studwick's days were growing very few.

In fact, the doctor felt that it was an open question whether Lauré or John Studwick would be the first to leave them, for the former seemed never to have recovered from the shock of his descent, but lay in a helpless, raving state, evidently growing weaker day by day, till, in place of getting up to sit and watch the sea from the cabin window, he now rarely

rose, and then only with the assistance of old Rasp, who, as a kind of recompense for being the cause of his state, constituted himself his nurse, and waited on him night and day.

"I hate him like the very old un," growled Rasp, when talking about him to Oakum; "but as I've had my bit of a go at him for what he did, I ain't going to see him die like a dog for want of help."

And so the days glided on till the schooner, with her freight of silver, was in mid-ocean, and still the fates favoured them. It was a lovely evening, and the sun was descending fast in the west, turning the sea into one heaving mass of orange and gold. Nearly every one was on deck—Mr. Parkley and the captain together talking of the future of the voyage, and Mr. Wilson seated with his chin resting on his hand gazing pensively at Bessy, who was kneeling beside the mattress on which her brother lay, his great eyes looking towards the golden flooded sky. Dutch and Hester, too, were together, silent and thoughtful, while the solemn grandeur of the scene seemed to impress even the men forward, for they sat about the deck almost without a word.

It was with quite a start then that Dutch saw the doctor come up softly from below, and approach him with a solemn look upon his face.

"Is anything wrong?" said Dutch, though he almost read what the other had to say.

"Your enemy will soon be powerless to work you evil, Mr. Pugh," was the reply; "he is dying, I think, fast."

Hester shuddered, and clasped her husband's arm.

"Poor wretch!" exclaimed Dutch. "There," he cried impetuously, "don't talk of enemies at such a time. I forgive him the ill he did to me. May God be merciful too."

"Amen," said Hester, beneath her breath; and then she shuddered and clung more closely to her husband, for so shaken had her nerves been that it seemed to her even now they were not free from the Cuban's influence.

"Can you not save his life?" said Dutch. "He should have time to repent."

"But would he?" said Mr. Meldon. "I fear life to him would only be the opportunity to work us all more ill."

"For heaven's sake, don't think of that, man," cried Dutch. "Have you tried all you could to save him?"

"I have tried all I know," said the doctor, earnestly. "I cannot think of one hour's lapse of duty."

"No, no, of course not," said Dutch, holding out his hand. "I insult you by such a supposition."

CHAPTER XLVIII.—A PUZZLING CASE.

IT was about an hour later that the doctor went below to his patient, to find him lying perfectly still, and hardly breathing, so softly his pulsation seemed to rise and fall; while, faithful to his post, Rasp was by his side.

Lauré was evidently sleeping; and, after a brief examination, Mr. Meldon turned thoughtfully away, for there were peculiarities in the case which he could not fathom.

As he reached the deck, he was touched on the

shoulder; and, turning sharply, he found Rasp behind him.

"Is he going to die to-night, doctor, like t'other poor chap?"

"I can't say, Rasp," was the reply. "His case puzzles me. To-night he sleeps so easily that he seems to be better, and as if he were rallying fast."

"Oh, no—he aint," said Rasp, shaking his head oracularly. "That's the artfulness of his nature. He's a-dying sharp."

"How do you know?"

"'Cause I heard him a-muttering to hisself when he thought as I wasn't listening, and then he got talking to hisself in his foreign lingo; and when I came into sight again he began picking at his blanket."

"May be," said Mr. Meldon; "but, all the same, he's certainly better."

"Yah! stuff!" ejaculated Rasp, as he descended to the cabin. "He's dying fast, and it's going to be to-night. I can feel it as plain as can be, poor chap. But he's an out and out bad 'un, and only got what he deserves."

Rasp took several pinches of snuff in succession.

"How rum this snuff is to-night," he muttered, as he settled himself on the locker opposite where Lauré lay, and then proceeded to watch the night through, after refusing the help of Oakum and Pollo, both of whom had offered to relieve him, and in the course of half an hour he was sleeping heavily.

And so a couple of hours glided away; when, just as all was perfectly silent on board the schooner, and all save the watch on deck slept soundly, Lauré, the Cuban, rose from his simulated sleep, and, after a glance at Rasp, stole to the locker in which lay his clothes, slipped them on silently, and then made softly for the deck.

It was no tottering walk of a feeble man, but the quick, soft, cat-like tread of some one full of life and energy, and bent upon some set design. And so it was; for the time for the execution of the fell purpose upon which his mind had been fixed ever since he had lain there, feeble at first from the shock, but daily growing stronger and meditating revenge, had arrived.

He was too well acquainted with the routine of the schooner not to be fully aware of what he could do; and while the man bent drowsily over the wheel, and Oakum and another were on the look-out in the bows, he took the falls in his hand, and cleverly let the boat on the davits glide down and kiss the softly heaving wave almost without a sound, but not until he had secured the painter to one of the pins, after which he slid down the falls with the activity of a boy, unhooked the boat, and climbed back on deck.

Next he paused to listen for a few moments in the darkness, and then, with cat-like step, descended into the portion of the vessel which had been set apart for the store connected with the diving apparatus.

It was evident that he had often been here before, as he seemed to know where everything was kept; and after lifting down the large jar of the galvanic battery, which, from the care with which he took it, was evidently half full of acid, he bore it to the steps, and then placing his hand on a particular shelf, he

took down a canister of dynamite cartridges, and placed it against the bulkhead.

This done, he felt along the shelf to where, days before, he had placed a large reel of thin silk-covered wire, and tying it to the loop of metal in one of the cartridges, he backed slowly out of the cabin, unwinding the wire as he went till he reached the deck, where he continued his way to the side, and lowered the reel into the boat.

Water was already there, and provisions that he had been storing up for days; and now the first sound that had left his lips escaped in the form of a low, demoniacal chuckle as, lightly raising himself upon the bulwark, he sat there for a moment, and shook his fist in the direction of the cabin.

"Curse you!" he muttered. "You thought to outwit me, but you did not know your enemy. Sink! whiten, perish with the silver that carries you down; for revenge is sweet, even at such a cost."

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

A Mission to Siam.

THE *Singapore Daily Times* publishes a report by its special correspondent of the journey of Sir William Robinson, who was deputed to proceed on a special mission to Bangkok, for the purpose of investing the King of Siam with the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. His Excellency was accompanied by Major M'Nair, Secretary to the Mission; Dr. T. I. Rowell, Principal Civil Medical Officer, Straits Settlements; Captain Walker, H. M. 28th Regiment, A.D.C.; Lieutenant Rhodes, R.E., extra A.D.C.; and Mr. E. W. Howard, private secretary. The special correspondent gives us the following picture of the capital of Siam:—

"Bangkok is called by some the 'Venice of the East,' and not having seen its sister city I am unable to attempt a comparison. That the novelties of traversing the high-street of a populous city by water, seeing floating houses innumerable flourishing alongside a large river, and making all manner of journeys in house boats, strike the stranger is true, but the romance is sadly wanting when the poetic gondoliers are not over savoury in their skins, not particularly intelligent. There is no Bridge of Sighs, and the floating houses are the abodes of bliss of practical Chinese, who are all day either performing their own ablutions, or putting their chubby children through the same ceremony. Streets of water intersect streets of water, wooden houses anchored in the rivers and creeks are busy scenes of commerce. Meats, vegetables, drinks, and bazaar commodities generally are purchased in these shaky tenements. But wherever one goes the irrepressible Celestial is master of the situation. Gambling-houses there are in plenty, from which the Government fill their coffers. The hewers of wood and the drawers of water in their own country are the Siamese only, slaves to their nobles, fools to themselves. Money there must be in plenty, it is true; for, wherever the eye may rest, magnificent Buddhist temples and gorgeous palaces rear their heads. But the wealth is evidently confined to the few; the drudge of slavery is undoubt-

edly the bitter lot of the many. The religion of the Siamese is the Buddhist."

The following is what he tells us of the King's household:—

"The King's harem contains, I am told, a goodly number of women. Of these one is supposed to be his lawful wife; and the laws of matrimony where royalty is concerned are so expansive that his Majesty's taste in the choice of a wife of his bosom fell upon his own half-sister—he and the royal lady whom he cherishes being children of the same father, but of different mothers. In addition to this load of responsibility, he is the lord and master of about one hundred concubines, mostly the daughters of nobles, who feel it a high honour to present any of their daughters who may happen to possess some extra share of good looks for his Majesty's delectation. These slaves, again, have their slaves—parasite upon parasite. So that his Majesty has to provide periodically a matter of dresses for one thousand ladies."

On the afternoon of November 19th his Excellency had a private audience of the King, and next day they visited the King's uncle, and also one of his Majesty's brothers. The proceedings were most conventional:—

"The furniture in the rooms of both mansions is painfully European; the ottomans, chandeliers, chairs, and pier glasses are such as might be seen in any English house whose owner could boast of some wealth, and the albums which always ornament the centre tables contain portraits invariably of the Queen of England—the Empress of India, as the Siamese delight to term her—the Prince of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family, with a host of members of royalty generally. A piano, too, of European manufacture, adorns the room, and in some instances Lady Robinson was asked to play, which she did willingly."

In the afternoon, Sir William Robinson and suite visited the magnificent temple of Wat Cheng—a pillar of beauty which attracts the eye for miles around:—

"At the landing place from the river the party were met by priests wearing yellow robes, typical, some traditions say, of want and persecution—others, in commemoration of Buddha having obtained in exchange yellow clothes from a hunter, who in reality was an angel. This splendid temple, built in the Gothic style, with quaint emblems on its massive belt, towers a height of 300 feet; and the visitors climbed up a steep stairway of stone steps to a distance of 120 feet, from which they obtained an excellent view of Bangkok, the country round and the river winding for miles to the sea. The building upwards to the spire is covered with porcelain, which gives a colour and gleam most pleasant to the eye. Outside the entrance to the Bote are two horrible-looking gigantic demons, guarding the sacred building; and within are images of Buddha, and curious collections of wooden images, which figure upon a massive altar. The walls are adorned with paintings of all kinds, mostly illustrative of incidents in the life of Buddha, though not all confined to them. The paintings are imitations of the Italian frescoes, but do not strike one

as being from the brushes of masters. This temple is 110 years old, and the money, labour, and time which were expended in its erection must form a goodly item. After Sir William Robinson had thanked and shaken hands with the priests, the party then returned in house boats, as before calling in at some floating houses on the way to purchase some curios—Chinamen, of course, being the vendors."

Lady Robinson held a reception, and the programme of the evening included a nautch performance, which was not favourably regarded by the correspondent, though he states that it was vigorously applauded by the audience in the balcony. He next gives the following "bird's-eye view" of the capital:—

"If one desires to obtain a good view of Bangkok, I would advise him to mount up the pagoda 'Wat Saket,' literally 'Mountain of Gold.' From this eminence Bangkok can be taken in in three glances. The grand palace first meets the eye with its tapering spires and charming roofs, the Emerald Temple standing out in glistening proportions; to the left is Bangkok proper, with its hosts of floating houses studding the banks of the river, a few bungalows of Europeans and the flags denoting the residences of the various consuls. On the right stands the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and behind it may be seen the fields of rice, the staple product of Siam—showing up glaringly white in the sunshine. Away in the distance is the palace of the second king, and the temple of 'the glorious old residence' to which belong the strictest sect of the priesthood, and where the late king spent some years of his life as a Buddhist priest. Hovering over one's head are vultures, besotted-looking brutes, the reason for whose attentions I afterwards discovered. Leaving this portion of the temple, and crossing opposite, are the grounds where cremation takes place. A suggestive burnt appearance has the grass in this neighbourhood, and the urns in which the remains of believers are burnt stand prominently to the view."

"Like most things in life and death, there is a distinction made between the rich and poor in cremation; the rich man is provided with a grand receptacle wherein his courtly bones may be reduced to ashes; a building stands close by where his relations and friends may hold revelry for a week or longer, a theatre flourishes on the spot where they may enjoy the nautch dance, but to the poor only the simplest means are afforded. True, for a small sum the scented wood may be procured to fire the remains, and a priest is ever found willing to perform the office; but there must be an absence of pageantry, dearly prized though it may be, and cremation must be conducted in an iron rather than silver or brass urn."

"Further on from the region where cremation takes place come graves, in which are deposited the bodies of Buddhists who have died by the 'visitation of God.' These are buried for some months, if burial in our sense of the term can be applied to thrusting down bodies in muddy refuse without the slightest regard being shown as to the individuality of the person thus consigned to obloquy. These are, after some months, exhumed and cremated."

But, further on still, are the horrible signs of barbarity. Here are a lot of howling pariah dogs, brutes which prowl about unmolested, unchecked, waiting for human prey. Above are the vultures casting eager glances at the ground, awaiting their feed, which is not long distant. This is the spot whereon the dead bodies of enthusiasts who feel they have not led a righteous life in this world, and occasionally of criminals, are thrown, and in the midst of this scene of carnage, in wooden huts, reside some Buddhist priests, who station themselves there with the object of contemplating the mutability of humanity! Their lot is not to be envied. Away from the company of mankind, these Levites have for companions but death, and horrid brutes who fatten upon the carcasses of men. And this in sight of splendour and display, at the doors of a palace where munificence, wealth, and grandeur go hand in hand. I witnessed a revolting scene connected with this horrible place which sickened me, but as its relation might have a similar effect upon readers, I forbear to mention the details."

Friday, November 22nd, was the day appointed for the investiture, and, by the courtesy of the King of Siam's Foreign Minister, the correspondent was enabled to enter the palace three hours before the time fixed for the ceremony. This enabled him to write the following picture of the palace:—

"The palace is a town in itself. Surrounding the buildings in which are the private and state apartments are the shops of a busy hive of traders, the commodities for sale, fruit, vegetables, &c., being exposed before their doors, where lie squatting, chewing their betel nut with immovable countenances and unperturbed expression, the vendors of the wares. Further on come the sheds for the accommodation of elephants and horses, where, to-day, busy stablemen are grooming chargers, furbishing up trappings, brightening plated harness and collar gear.

"Turning into one of the many courtyards, the first close sight of the palace proper is impressive; grandeur and taste are blended happily in its architecture, and the roofs rising upon roofs, forming layers as it were, give a particularly pretty effect, enhanced in a great measure by the coloured tiles, which glisten in many hues, and the weird-looking serpents which adorn all the gables. These latter are figures of the cobra snake, which—so tradition has it—at one time afforded protection to Buddha while preaching, by guarding him from behind with its hood.

"A building which accords more with European practical notions of architecture rises among the mass; and, on entering, one is struck by its particularly neat appearance. Not an inch of ground appears to have been wasted, and not a stone or brick can be seen which would disturb the general harmony. This is the Mint. There are the furnaces, the smelting and coining rooms, and groups of Siamese on their haunches busy with their labours. Heaps of unrefined precious metal lie around, silver coins there are in abundance, thrust in corners, some assorted, others in unassorted heaps; but an air of order, of responsibility, prevails. There are no detective eyes to watch the workmen

in their labours, nor armed sentries to strike terror; but, nevertheless, a robbery of even the smallest trifle scarcely ever takes place, such is the fear of the Siamese to meddle with anything within the sacred palace. The process of smelting and refining is worked by machinery; and the mint, strange to say, is conducted without any European supervision whatever.

"Another neat building is the Museum, which contains costly relics of the antiquity and barbaric splendour of the Siamese kings from generations past. Gold thrones and rubied crowns, state beds and palanquins with richly gold-embroidered cushions, the coronation robes—a mass simply of diamonds and gold—princesses' dresses to be worn on state occasions, displaying a blaze of diamonds from head to skirt, precious elephants' trunks, and gorgeous displays generally, are here to be seen. Within the cases are collections of all sorts, which generally find place in a museum. The various Siamese orders find prominence in one, while within another are a few head-dresses of princesses, on which sparkle some thousands of pounds' worth of diamonds alone. One item, which the curator of the Museum highly prizes, is a piece of Ming china, which, he thinks, could not be surpassed, in its truthfulness of true blue, in the world. The Museum is under the charge of Mr. Henry Alabaster, an English gentleman, the author of 'The Wheel of the Law,' an interesting work on Buddhism, and who for some years has held appointments under the King of Siam, and is reputed to be an excellent Siamese scholar.

"One of the handsomest structures within the palace walls is the Emerald Temple, one of the most sacred of these Buddhist edifices, which contains an emerald figure of Buddha, before which a light is kept perpetually burning. The spire of this magnificent building attracts the spectator from all points of the palace, and the jade, throwing a charmingly pretty emerald tint, with which it is embellished all over, displays a refreshing sight in the sunshine, from which it is difficult to withdraw one's eyes. Inside the grand octagonal pillars, the quaint windows and the ornamented roofs, the tessellated brass flooring, the painted walls, the raised altar, upon which curiosities of all kinds are prominent, the 'dim, sepulchral light' of the everlasting-wicked candle, with an occasional gleam from the diamonded-raised image of Buddha, inspire a feeling of wonder, if not veneration. In this temple the king worships, and superstition—where does it not reign?—has it that if, through any mischance or neglect, the candle burning before Buddha's figure should be extinguished before a period of twelve months from the time when it was lighted, calamity and misfortune would be the lot of the land. Out into the courtyard again. Round by the Audience Hall—'the Hall of Eternity,' I believe, is the literal translation of its name from the Siamese dialect. Ministers are now on the alert, and speedy messengers are being despatched to all quarters, carrying general orders to officials and subalterns."

Shortly after three o'clock the members of the embassy arrived, and were escorted to the Audience Hall, where seats were provided for them on the

right of the throne. When the English ambassador arrived the King's band played "God save the Queen." The correspondent noted a great change:—

"A few years ago a representative of the Queen would have had to crawl and beg for admission to that jealous Court. There stands to-day erect, with fitting pride, acknowledging the princely welcome which greets him, her Majesty's Ambassador, the bearer of a distinguished order to the King—of assurances of regard and goodwill to the nation. The Royal Guard, a splendid regiment, who were stationed to receive his Excellency within the palace gates, now presented arms on his arrival, when his Excellency again uncovered, and, hat in hand, was then escorted to the ante-hall, where it was arranged he should wait the arrival of the King in the Audience Hall. I thereupon made my way to the latter, and the blaze of gorgeousness which met my eyes dazzled me, and called to mind only the scenes from the chapters of the 'Arabian Nights.'

"Facing the door, and near the foot of a staircase, stood a gilded throne raised upon a dais before which, laid upon the tessellated marble floor, was a square of silvered Turkey carpet. To the right and left of the throne were ranged on each side the invariable insignia of royalty—the seven umbrellas or tiers of umbrellas, each richly embroidered in gold, and behind were the betel nut box, match box, cigarette box, and tea-pot, sacred to royalty alone. The hall itself, a splendid specimen of taste, is built with a due regard to light and sound, and the gilded panels on its pillars, sides, and front showed to advantage. The lofty ceiling is tastefully ornamented, and, altogether, it is an excellent example of the architect's skill.

"On both sides of the throne were ranged the princes and the nobles—the former, scores in number, being on the left, while the latter, six hundred in number, were on the right. 'Gorgeous' is an adjective too weak to describe the dresses and jewels of both. A shining mass of gold network resplendent to a degree is the object from which the eye could not release itself, the surfeit of gold being relieved only by the glitter of numbers of diamonds from belt clasps.

"After each prince and noble had admired the general display of which he formed a part, and to which he administered, a flourish of trumpets and beating of gongs outside the entrance hall, and which reminded me of split bagpipes, announced that the King had left his private apartments for the hall; and immediately afterwards he entered. The King, who is of middle height, is a sprightly, intelligent, rather slight man of about twenty-five years, with a particularly agreeable countenance, high forehead, quick expression of eye, and those vermilion lips peculiar to betel-nut eaters.

"After acknowledging the salutations of the princes and nobles on either side of him, his Majesty took his seat on the throne, and ordered that her Majesty's Envoy should be conducted into the royal presence. Meanwhile his Majesty exchanged a few friendly greetings publicly with the Regent. Two minutes after the invitation from the throne the fine old National Anthem of 'God save the Queen,' which heard in the interior of the palace of a power-

ful foreign King has double charms to an Englishman, announced that the ambassador and suite were on their way."

On the entrance of the embassy, who bowed to the King, his Majesty rose and stood during the remainder of the proceedings. Major M'Nair and Captain Mead then advanced and placed the Star and Collar of the Order on a gold salver provided for the purpose, and retired, backwards, taking the places they had previously occupied, immediately behind his Excellency. The Court herald having then made some proclamation, Sir William Robinson, in a loud, clear, and distinct voice, read impressively the address.

After his Excellency had concluded, Major M'Nair read in a loud voice Sir William Robinson's commission to invest the King, and then took the star, ribbon, and badge of the Order off the table and handed them to Sir William Robinson, who fastened the handsome star of the Order upon his Majesty's breast. His Excellency then presented to the King the ribbon and badge of the Order, and his Majesty, assisted by his Excellency, placed the ribbon across his breast, it being contrary to Siamese etiquette in any one to lift his hand over the head of the King. His Majesty was next invested with the collar of the Order, which was handed to his Excellency by Captain Mead, of her Majesty's ship *Modeste*, Major M'Nair reading the admonition. The blue uniform of the Body Guard, which his Majesty wore without any decorations upon his breast, displayed the star and collar to advantage, and the insignia of the Order was all round the centre of observation in the hall. The private secretary then handed the envelope containing the statutes to Sir William Robinson, who handed them to the King. This having completed the ceremony of investiture, his Majesty, in a clear voice, read in Siamese the following reply:—

"We have with very great pleasure received the insignia of the most distinguished British Order of St. Michael and St. George, which her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, our most excellent ally, has been pleased to present us, an honour to us, enrolling us among her royal relations who are members of this Order, being a special mark of the appreciation by her Majesty of our efforts to promote the good relations of our two kingdoms, which in respect of her Majesty's colonies are neighbours. We beg to assure your Excellency that we are very pleased and gratified to have this proof of her Majesty the Queen's appreciation of our goodwill and true and earnest affection for her Majesty and her country. We have constantly the desire to promote the still further development of our very friendly relations, and in everything which occurs in Siam we ever use our utmost efforts to prevent any difficulty arising which might impair that friendship. If ever the interests of her Majesty's Government in the neighbourhood of your frontiers afford us the opportunity of displaying goodwill, we have always the greatest pleasure in giving such assistance as we can, trusting thereby to bind still closer the ties of our alliance. We request your Excellency to assure her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Empress of India, our most noble ally, that we accept the insignia of this most

distinguished Order as a very great honour to ourselves. We trust that the long-standing close and firm alliance between her Majesty and our Royal Father we ourselves have maintained in truth and honour, and we trust that we shall continue to maintain it in its integrity without abatement. May the Power which is Supreme in the universe bestow its blessings on her Majesty your Queen and her family and her dominions, granting them the highest glory and prosperity. We highly appreciate and are peculiarly gratified by her Majesty the Queen having confided this mission to your Excellency, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the relations between the Government of the Straits Settlements and ourselves and our Government having for a long course of years been unvarying in their pleasant friendly character. Your Excellency has moreover given us the greatest satisfaction by the cordial manner in which you have fulfilled the duties of your mission. We shall ever have a kindly remembrance of your Excellency's visit to Siam to invest us with the insignia of this most distinguished Order."

The King then handed the reply to Sir William Robinson, and entered into a friendly conversation with his Excellency before all present, through the medium of an interpreter. His Excellency replied, and the King then retired.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Mutiny.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XIV.—"HELP IS SURE TO COME."

AS Colonel Stafford's regiment marched towards Chutnegunj, the coolies who bore the palkees containing Dora Vaughan and Mabel Stafford lagged behind the column, letting it get farther and farther in advance. This was unobserved in the darkness, or not heeded by those who were aware of it, for it was a habit with most of the bearers, whether of palkee or dooly, to get as far away from the rest as possible, on account of the kicks, oaths, and blows they received from any of the soldiers with whom they happened to come in contact.

Not unnaturally those they carried objected to this isolation when aware of it, and obliged their coolies to unite themselves again with the main body; but at this time the two girls were sleeping in blissful unconsciousness, and the bearers did as they pleased.

A long stretch of road divided them from the regiment with its train of camp followers, invisible now, though the distant tramp of feet was audible, when the two sets of bearers began to quicken their steps, as a sound of horses' feet was heard, gradually growing plainer.

The next minute they were surrounded by sowars, the leader of whom demanded to know who were the occupants of the palkees.

Mabel, roused by the sudden stoppage, drew back the slide of her little box-like carriage, and looked out, to start back in horror as she became aware of her position.

A second glance showed her that she was not

alone in this misfortune, though she could not tell who her companion was, as it was only with difficulty that she could distinguish anything. She sank back, faint and trembling, and waited for what was to follow.

After a minute or two, during which she had heard a confusion of voices, mingling with the noise made by the feet of the restless horses, impatient to start again, the motion of the palkee was resumed.

But where was she being taken? Mabel felt instinctively that it was in a different direction to that in which she wished to go, and a wild impulse to scream for help seized her. However, she restrained herself, for, as she listened to the ring of the horses' hoofs on the ground, she felt that it would be worse than useless, as it would draw the attention of her captors.

That night seemed as though it would never end to the two girls, the hours dragging themselves along more slowly, they thought, than ever before. They longed for daylight to show them what kind of men these were who had thus borne them off as it seemed from the midst of their friends.

At dawn Mabel looked out, to see a number of wild-looking sowars, apparently on every side; and as she glanced fearfully at their dark, fierce faces, she felt her courage sink, and a strange, hopeless sensation take possession of her heart.

A little to the right was Dora's palkee, but the slides were closed, so that she did not obtain a glimpse of her companion. The bearers looked panting and exhausted—much-enduring as those unfortunate beings are in general—from the swinging trot which the sowars obliged them to keep up, occasionally giving, with the flat of their tulwars, a gentle reminder to the poor coolies as to what was required of them.

After a brief observation, Mabel again shut herself in, trying to feel courageous, and to console herself with the thought that they would very speedily be missed, pursued, and rescued.

When the heat was increasing fast, and Mabel was nearly stifled, motion ceased all at once, and the long, weary journey was over. The palkee was set down, a babel of tongues, a clatter of horses' feet, and other confused sounds ensued, lasting for some time.

Mabel had begun to think that she must be forgotten, when the slide was suddenly pushed back, and a man gave her to understand by signs that she must get out.

After a brief hesitation she obeyed; but as soon as she stood in the open air, and a quick glance had shown her the realities of her position, a sudden recollection of the horrible crimes that had been perpetrated of late came over her. In imagination she saw again the mutilated bodies of women and children of whose deaths she had heard vivid accounts during the last few days, and suddenly the white garments of the figures round her joined together in one confused mass, and all was blank.

"Mabel, Mabel, speak to me!"

The words penetrated at last, and her eyes unclosed.

She was lying on a luxurious couch, while Dora,

whose voice had roused her, was kneeling by her side, chafing her hands, and fanning her vigorously.

"At last!" said Dora. "Mabel, I thought you were never coming to. What made you faint?"

"It is so terrible," said Mabel, shuddering.

"You look older and more self-possessed than I," said Dora, "but I believe I have more courage. My dear girl," she said, rising from her knees, and taking one or two excited steps to and fro, before stopping again in front of her friend, "we must make up our minds to be brave and resolute, for our only hope is in that. Depend upon it, friends will come to our aid in time; but they have to find out where we are, and till then we must be our own defenders."

Mabel sat up, and looked in a startled way at the flashing eyes, flushed cheeks, and heaving bosom of her friend.

"Dora, is that you? Hush, dear; we are not our own protectors, for what can two weak girls do? Let us pray for aid from Heaven."

She knelt by the couch, and bowed her head on her hands, and Dora stood for a moment regarding her, before looking from the window up to the intensely blue sky, with a wild, strange look in her eyes, and hands clasped tightly together.

There was silence for a time, and then Mabel rose and approached her.

"Can we not get away?" she asked, calmly.

"No," said Dora, sadly. "We are as much prisoners as if we were locked into a dungeon in the tower. I made sure of that while you were unconscious."

"Do you know where we are?"

"I am afraid we are in the power of Jhod Rao, but I have not seen him. We shall soon know, I should think. Mabel," she said, in a whisper, while her face grew pale as ashes, and her breath came quickly, "look here!"

She half drew, from inside her dress, a little dagger; and Mabel started back with a cry of horror.

"Hush, for Heaven's sake, or some one will come," Dora whispered, excitedly. "Mabel, if that man comes near me—if the worst comes to the worst—I could die, and I would, before he should touch me."

She returned the dagger to its place, while Mabel stood gazing at her, stunned and terrified, while she went on speaking in a hurried, excited manner. "Anna gave it to me on the day when Rao overtook us, coming across the country. I dared not show it to Rob, and tell him the thought that had been in my heart, so I have kept it hidden about me since. Anna said, 'Kill him,' but I thought—kill myself!"

"Dora, are you mad? Oh, this is too horrible!" And Mabel burst into a flood of tears.

At this moment the door was opened, and a native woman appeared, bearing food, with which she approached the two girls, but she was impatiently waved back.

"We want nothing," said Dora. "Whose house is this?"

The woman stared and then muttered something in Hindustani.

"She does not understand English," said Mabel, who had dried her eyes quickly, and was endeavouring to appear composed.

Dora, struck by another idea, tried a different plan.

"Baboo Jhod Rao?" she said, interrogatively, with a glance round the room.

A decided shake of the head was the sole answer, and they were once more alone. However, though a little reassured, Dora could not feel certain that she had been comprehended, and she longed for an opportunity of knowing how they were placed.

"Mabel," said Dora, as they sat hand in hand, a little later, "help is sure to come before long. Robert and Captain Morley would never rest till they found us, I am sure; and your father, even if he could not join them himself, would be ready to send half the regiment in search of us."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mabel. "Papa is very stern and strict in his ideas of duty; and if the men were wanted to fight, he would think of that even before me, I believe. My chief hope is in your brother."

Dora was silent, and her face, as she grew thoughtful, relapsed into that sad, wistful, tired expression now getting usual to it. A few days had changed the happy, hopeful girl into a woman whose pride as well as her heart had received a deep wound, the scar of which time would never entirely efface.

Mabel walked round to see what chance there was of escape, but her examination proved wholly unsatisfactory. There were two windows to the room, which was large, and luxuriously furnished. One of these looked on a square, paved courtyard, some thirty feet below; the other on an extensive carpeted hall.

Mabel looked out of the last of these windows, and saw several attendants gliding to and fro through the divan, passing through the numerous doors, one of which evidently opened into a room under that in which she now was.

Opposite her and over another door was a lattice window similar to that through which she was gazing, and through it she could distinguish moving figures.

As she looked, one paused, and a pair of dark eyes were fixed intently on her, which evidently belonged to one of her own sex.

"It is the zenana," she thought, and turned shivering away to resume her examination.

The one door of the room was fastened on the outside, and Mabel turned from it despairingly. Her eyes wandered round over the richly-coloured soft carpet, charpoys, of which there were two, and chairs, all presenting a comfortable appearance very unlike that of a prison.

"But we are prisoners," she thought, "and escape looks more impossible every minute."

The hours passed slowly by, and no one approached them but the woman who had been before, and who now spread a table with a white cloth, quite in the English style.

The two girls watched her as she went to and fro, taking things which were brought to the door to her, and soon an inviting repast was placed on the table.

"Are we dreaming, Mab?" said Dora, as the woman left them to themselves. "It is one o'clock, and there is an ordinary tiffin spread for us. Can it be possible that we are in the hands of some native grandee? Come, Mabel, let us look on the best side. Whoever he is, he must be a friend to the English, or he would not know so much about our ways. Sit down, and let me help you to some curry."

She tried to speak lightly, but the attempt was a failure, and Mabel shook her head.

But Dora would hear of no refusal. She drew her friend to the table and forced her to sit down.

"We have tasted nothing since last night, remember, and I see no reason why we should starve. Make a good lunch, and you will feel ready for anything. For my own part, I wonder how I can, under the circumstances, but I feel positively hungry."

The result was that they both ate heartily, and, as Dora had predicted, felt ready for anything afterwards, their spirits rising unconsciously.

As a different woman came to remove the things, Mabel immediately addressed her.

"Do you speak English?"

"Yes, missee."

"Whose house is this we are in?"

"It is the palace of the Rajah of Krohl, missee."

"I have heard of him, Dora," said Mabel, quickly.

"He is friendly, I believe."

Dora turned to the attendant.

"Are we prisoners?"

"Don't know, missee," said the woman, shortly; and she refused to answer further questions.

An hour or two later there was a sound of movement and feet approaching them, and this same woman threw open the door.

"What is it?" asked Dora, trembling.

"The rajah is coming to pay the mem sahibs a visit."

Dora slipped her hand into Mabel's, which felt icy cold, and clasped it tightly; but no word passed between them.

CHAPTER XV.—"PAYNE, YOU VILLAIN."

"YOU had better let me prescribe for you, Stafford. All this worry is telling on you, and you don't look half the man you did a fortnight ago. In a few days you will find yourself obliged to give up and take to your bed. You are doing too much."

"It is well for me that I have so much to do," said the colonel. "In any other case, the anxiety would kill me. Go and see your patients, and don't trouble about me till I ask you. What do you think of my wife this morning?"

"There is a decided improvement in her pulse since yesterday, but I am very little use, you know. There is nothing the matter with her that news of your daughter's safety will not put right. What are you going?"

The colonel nodded, and hurried away, and the doctor proceeded to take his advice.

The first patient he went to was Ensign Payne.

"I shall throw you over directly, young man," he said. "The cut is nearly well, and you will soon get over this weakness. I have my hands full now,

you know, without attending on those who don't need me."

"Very good, doctor," said Payne. "How soon do you think I shall be fit for service?"

"In a week, if necessary. But don't be in too much of a hurry."

Payne was silent, and looked thoughtful, as the doctor went on.

"No news yet of Morley and Vaughan, is there? Ah, poor fellows, I am afraid theirs is a hopeless quest. I wouldn't say so to the colonel for anything, but it is my firm belief that we have seen the last of those two poor girls. Did I hurt you then?"

He was examining the wound, and the last question was elicited by a sudden start and groan from the young man, who turned pale as ashes.

"Yes," he said, between his set teeth.

"Very sorry; I've done now," said the doctor, as he rearranged the bandages. "As I was saying, with regard to those girls, why, only yesterday I heard about two ladies who escaped from Moolacund. It was an awful affair. They were discovered hiding among some trees by a party of the rebels, dragged out, and in—"

"For Heaven's sake, be quiet, Miller," said Payne, his face working. "I can't stand it."

"H'm," said the doctor, looking at him more attentively. "I can't think what has come to you this morning, my lad. Why, at first, when I came to you and did what I know must have hurt horribly, you never even groaned, and to-day you are like a woman, and can't bear to be touched."

As the young man made no reply, the worthy doctor took himself off to see his next patient.

The numbers of the wounded were daily increasing, and not a few had succumbed, in spite of every care and attention. There was a surgeon already in Chutnegunj, and he and Dr. Miller shared the work, without any thought as to whether those each attended were really their own patients or not.

It was now three days since the girls had disappeared, and nothing had been heard of them, or of those who had so bravely gone out to seek them.

The colonel looked haggard and ill. He had not been content to wait for the return of Vaughan and his companions, but had sent out in different directions three natives on whom he could depend, or thought he could depend, to act as spies, and learn anything possible about his daughter and her friend. So far, neither of these men had returned. The colonel strove to forget his anxiety in the rigid performance of duty, and in thinking what would be best for the defence of the fort.

Mrs. Stafford was ill with the shock, so he had another trouble in that direction.

"It is thorough prostration from worry," he told Harland on the previous day; and the major shook his head slowly.

"My wife," he said, "bears up wonderfully. I will tell her to see Mrs. Stafford, and cheer her up. You see, she brings her strong common-sense into the question. I said to Morley, the other day, 'If ever you marry, let it be a woman with plenty of common-sense.' Now, my wife—"

The colonel, however, had not time to hear more then of the perfections of that extraordinary woman,

and the major's eulogium of his better-half remained uncompleted.

Attacks from without were constant, the fort being surrounded, and its assailants showing themselves by no means devoid of military tact and skill, so that all the energies of the garrison were required to repulse them.

Another day or two slipped by, and the rattle of musketry was almost incessant during the light hours, and one or two night attacks were attempted, but at present without doing any harm.

"How long do you suppose we can hold out?"

Payne, who was now going about as usual, asked the colonel at breakfast.

"For weeks," said the colonel, "and that we shall have no need to do; for I think, with Harland, that this sort of thing cannot go on. It will all be put a stop to in a week or two. However, I expect reinforcements at any time, for Chester has sent despatches, describing how we are situated, to headquarters."

Colonel Chester, who had held Chutnegunj by himself previous to the arrival of Stafford's regiment, nodded sharply. He was a little, thin, sharp-featured man, who never said a word more than he could help on any subject. Though very popular with his men, none of his brother officers liked him much, though all were willing to give testimony to his shrewdness and military capabilities.

Payne looked from him to Colonel Stafford, and tried to guess what thoughts were passing beneath that stern and severe exterior; but whatever that officer felt was seldom allowed to appear on the surface, and for the time he was baffled.

Breakfast over, the young ensign, who had not yet resumed his ordinary duties, went to see Mrs. Stafford, who was lying down, looking white and ill. Payne had a great respect for the colonel's wife, with whom he was rather a favourite, and he took her hand, and looked anxiously at her as he inquired how she was.

"Better, thank you," she said, trying to smile. "And you are very well again, I see. My dear boy, I hardly knew you as you came in; you are beginning to look so much older."

Payne flushed with pleasure, but made no reply to this remark.

"Mrs. Stafford," he said, after a pause, "I came to tell you that I am going out to-day, either to join Vaughan and Morley, or to find out something for myself. I thought it would make you a little more hopeful, to know that all possible was being done."

"The colonel will never agree," she said, struggling with her agitation.

"He will, I think," said Payne, calmly.

"Have you a mother living?" asked Mrs. Stafford, after a minute.

The young man shook his head sadly.

"If you had, I should say, do not go, for her sake. As it is—"

"You bid me go, and wish me success."

"I do. God bless you," said the poor woman, bursting into tears, and sobbing unrestrainedly.

Payne stood a moment irresolutely, and then, first raising her hand to his lips, he turned, and hurried out of the tent.

He next sought the colonel, and, without any preface, said, abruptly—

"Colonel, will you give me leave to go after the others?"

"What others?" said the colonel, looking at him in a bewildered way.

"Vaughan, Morley, and Corporal McAndrew."

"What are you thinking of, Payne? You must be mad to suggest such a thing."

"Not at all, sir," said Payne, coolly. "That is, no more mad than they were. Four men would be no better off than one by himself, if they once fell into the enemy's hands. You agree?"

"Most certainly I do not. You shall not commit suicide while I can prevent it. There, I have no more time to spare."

"But, colonel, for Heaven's sake hear me for one minute. I—"

"Not one!" said the colonel, sternly. "I cannot listen to another word."

Without heeding the bitter disappointment on the young man's frank, boyish face, he strode away.

Dr. Miller was in his tent, looking through a case of instruments for one in particular with which to effect a difficult surgical operation, when a native appeared at the door.

"Come in, my man," said the doctor, briskly. "What is it? A cut, or bullet wound? Come, speak out; I'm in a hurry. What, nothing the matter with you? What is it you want, then?"

"Master like to speak to you, sahib," said the man.

"Well, who is your master?" asked the doctor, impatiently.

"Sahib Payne."

"I didn't know his servant was six feet high," said the doctor to himself. "Tell him I'll look in as I go by."

"Yes, sahib. Afraid poor master be gone before night."

"Is he ill then—wounded? Why on earth didn't you say so before? There, get out of the way."

"Stop a minute, Miller," said the native, laying his hand on the other's arm. "I do really want to speak to you."

The doctor started violently.

"Payne, you villain, how dare you give me such a fright!" And Dr. Miller sank into a chair, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. The kind-hearted little man had turned quite pale at the thought of Payne being half-killed.

"I had no idea you were so nervous, or I would have revealed myself by degrees," said Payne, laughing.

"It wasn't that," said the doctor, indignantly.

"You don't mean to say you were so knocked over because I made you think I was dying?"

"You are the most conceited boy in Chutnegunj to imagine such a thing. However, I'm glad you're not."

"And you really did not know me?"

"No; but have you nothing better to do than to masquerade in a native's clothes, and try to find out how much people care whether you are dead or alive?"

"Miller, look at me well. Do I look like a beggarly Hindoo coolie?"

"Very much, or I should not have been taken in."

"I am going out to look for those two poor girls."

"Like that? With the colonel's permission?" exclaimed the doctor, looking rather staggered.

"He refuses it, like a hard-hearted, unfeeling old wretch, as I begin to think he is. Miller," he continued, lowering his voice, "I am going to desert."

"Have you counted the cost, my lad?"

"I have. I take you into my confidence because I wanted to know how I looked."

The doctor looked at him with rather a dismayed expression. After a minute's silence, he said—

"I shall report your intention to the colonel."

"Not you. I know, you better," said the ensign, calmly.

"And how did you manage it? Who else is in it?"

"The major's rascal," said Payne. "He is a splendid fellow—got me the togs, helped me to dye myself—in fact, I don't know what I should have done without him. He is going with me. He begged so hard, I couldn't refuse."

"But, my dear boy, you don't know a word of the language, do you? There, I can't help it, I must speak to the colonel."

"I know how to get over that. I shall be deaf and dumb. The villain tells me persons afflicted in that way are looked upon with a sort of superstitious reverence, which may be quite a protection to me."

He watched the doctor's changing face with an anxiety he tried not to show, for he had been certain of his sympathy and assistance.

"But you can't go by the sentries without a pass," said the doctor, as if struck by a bright idea.

"I shall manage that," said the young man, quietly; and then there was a pause, as the elder man stood apparently drawn two ways by two opposed feelings. At last he spoke in a deprecating tone—

"I should feel responsible for it if you were killed," he said, and moved towards the door.

"What a fool I was to come here!" exclaimed the ensign, passionately, and he turned pale with anger, even through the dark stain that disguised him. "Miller, it will be a mean and cowardly trick to betray my confidence."

"I like you too well to be moved by such words," said the doctor; and in another minute he was gone.

Payne stamped on the ground in his vexation.

"Fool, idiot that I was. But he may be too late yet."

He hurried out and went in search of the native, but he was not in the tent which the ensign occupied by himself now that Vaughan was gone. He could not make inquiries without betraying himself, and after wandering about for some minutes, looking in every direction without seeing the man he sought, he came to a standstill, almost in despair.

However, this frame of mind did not last above a few seconds, and he was soon hurrying to where he remembered having seen a scaling-ladder lying where it had been thrown.

Fortunately, this was near a part of the wall now

almost deserted, for a furious assault was being carried on at the opposite side of the fort.

Payne had the ladder raised in an instant, and as he placed his foot on the lowest rung, he heard the sound of hurried steps approaching where he stood.

Quaint Customs.

HOGMANAY is universally the popular name in Scotland for the last day of the year. It is celebrated as a day of high festival both among old and young, and is characterized by various festivities, which in days gone by often exceeded all bounds of moderation. Indeed, from the uproarious and boisterous merriment which formerly prevailed on this occasion, the season was called the Daft (that is, mad) Days—a term, however, which, we are glad to say, has almost completely fallen into disuse since the decline of these excesses.

Whilst the English people are beginning to settle down again to their respective pursuits after the festivities of the Christmas season, the Scotch, on the other hand, would appear to be in the habit of reserving their Christmas pleasures until now—a circumstance which, perhaps, may be attributed to the persevering efforts made by the Presbyterian clergy, for a century after the Reformation, to extinguish every kind of observance of Christmas.

The meaning of the word Hogmanay has been a sad puzzle to antiquarians, and, like the term Yule, its etymology is still an undecided question. According to the late Professor Robison, of Edinburgh, the word is derived from the phrase *Au qui menez* (To the mistletoe go), which the mummers formerly cried in France. Another derivation is from Hogg-nott, Hogenat, or Hogg-night, the old Scandinavian term for the night preceding the feast of Yule, and so called in allusion to the animals that were slaughtered on the occasion for sacrificial and festive purposes. Some consider it to be a corruption of *Au gueux menez*—that is, "Bring to the beggars;" and a further explanation combines the word with another sung along with it in chorus, and suggests that "Hogmanay, trollo-lay," are a corruption of the French *Homme est né, trois rois allois* ("A man is born, three kings are come"), in allusion to the birth of Christ and the visit of the wise men to Bethlehem, who in mediæval times were known as the Three Kings. All these derivations, however, are equally pure conjecture; and it is to be hoped that at some time or other the question will be satisfactorily answered.

In retired and primitive towns of Scotland it is customary, says Mr. Chambers, in his "Popular Rhymes," for the children of the poorer class of people on the morning of the last day of the year, or Hogmanay, to get themselves swaddled in a great sheet, doubled up in front so as to form a vast pocket, and then to go along the streets in little bands, calling at the doors of the wealthier inhabitants for a dole of wheaten bread. Each child gets one quadrant section of oatcake (sometimes, in the case of particular favourites, improved by an addition of cheese), and this is called their "hogmanay." In expectation of the large demands thus made upon them, the housewives busy themselves for several

days beforehand in preparing a sufficient quantity of cake. As soon as the children arrive at the door of a house they immediately cry out as loudly as they can, "Hogmanay," which is in itself a sufficient announcement of their demands. There are, however, other exclamations which are frequently used. One of these is "Hogmanay, trollolay." A favourite rhyme, too, used on the occasion is—

"Rise up, gude wife, and shake your feathers,
Dinna think that we are beggars;
We are hairns come to play,
And to seek our hogmanay."

In the "Whistlebinkie" collection of Scottish songs there is a pretty ballad by Alexander Smart, which describes this practice; and in "Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire," transcribed from private manuscripts—rare broadsides and scarce publications—by Mr. Ingledew, a gentleman well known as the historian of Northallerton, there is a fragment of a song once used at Richmond, Yorkshire. It is a pleasing and attractive sight, during the forenoon, to see the children on their way home, each with his large bag full of cakes, and perhaps scarcely able to waddle under the load.

As may be imagined, these contributions make no inconsiderable addition to the comfort of the poor man's household, and enable him to enjoy the festivities and merry-making of the New Year in a way that he otherwise would not be able to do. If the children are successful in obtaining a response to their appeals, very often not only are large sums of money collected by them, but goodly supplies of provisions and knick-knacks.

Formerly, and even now, we are informed, the custom is kept up, sweet cakes and a particular kind of sugar bread were distributed for several days before and after the new year. In the "Memoirs of Lord Langdale," by Sir T. Hardy, the writer, speaking of Scotch customs, says that on the last day of the year nearly everybody has a party either to dine or to sup. The company, almost entirely consisting of young people, wait together till the clock strikes twelve, when they begin to move and mutually to kiss each other. As soon as this ceremony is over they separate, and return home. The same writer informs us that by a particular privilege of the hour, wherever a man meets a woman he considers it his right to kiss her.

It was once customary in Orkney for large bands of the common class of people to assemble on New Year's Eve and pay a round of visits. They went from house to house, and, when admitted, commenced singing a song which they considered appropriate for the occasion. At Deerness this practice was kept up with very great vigour, and it is said that no slight was more keenly felt by a Deerness farmer than for his house to be passed over by these visitors. The inmates generally provided a table well spread with all sorts of good fare, and a hearty feast took place, followed by copious libations of ale, accompanied with the drinking of healths.

At the town of Biggar, in the upper ward of Lanarkshire, it has been the custom from time immemorial among the inhabitants to celebrate what is called "burning out the old year." For this

purpose, during the last day of the year, a large quantity of fuel is collected, consisting of branches of trees, brushwood, and coals, and placed in a heap at the "cross," and, at about nine o'clock at night, the lighting of the fire is commenced, surrounded by a large crowd of lookers-on, who each think it a duty to cast into the flaming mass some additional portion of material.

In the village of Bughead, situated on the southern shore of the Moray Firth, about nine miles from Elgin, a singular custom, almost unparalleled in any other part of Scotland, takes place on New Year's Eve (old style). It has been observed from time immemorial, and both its name and origin are still a subject of dispute among antiquarians. Towards evening the youths of the village assemble and make the necessary preparations for the "burning of the clavie," as the ceremony is termed. Dressed in blue over-frocks, they procure a strong empty barrel, and also one for breaking up, as well as a quantity of tar. Thus furnished, they repair to a particular spot close to the sea shore, and, three cheers having been given for the success of their undertaking, they commence operations. A hole, says a correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, about four inches in diameter, is first made in the bottom of the stronger barrel, into which the end of a pole, five feet in length, is firmly fixed; to strengthen their hold a number of supports are nailed round the outside of the former, and also closely round the latter. The tar is then put into the barrel and set on fire, and the remaining one being broken up, stave after stave is thrown in until it is quite full. The "clavie," already burning fiercely, is, amidst tremendous and prolonged cheering, carried by some strong man and borne away at a rapid pace. As soon as one clavie-bearer is tired he is succeeded by another, and so on. Formerly it was carried in triumph round every vessel in the harbour, and a handful of grain was thrown into each to ensure success for the coming year. The procession was afterwards confined to the boundaries of the town.

The circuit of the town being completed, the clavie is finally carried to a small artificial eminence—called the "durie"—near the northern extremity of the promontory, and, after being allowed to burn for a few minutes, is most unceremoniously hurled from its place, and the smoking embers scattered among the assembled crowd.

At one time this custom was attended with no small amount of superstition, for not only did the inhabitants consider its observance necessary for their welfare and prosperity, but they eagerly carried home fragments of the burnt clavie as preservatives against witchcraft, and the many ills that the flesh is subject to. The clavie has of late years degenerated into a mere frolic, kept up more for amusement than for any benefit which the due performance of the ceremony is believed to secure.

Unfortunately, the meaning of this curious custom is involved in complete mystery, although many attempts have been made to unravel its origin. Some have suggested that the word clavie is derived from the Latin *clavus*, a nail—witches having been not unfrequently put to death in a barrel stuck full of iron spikes. This, however, is improbable,

as also is the explanation that it is from the Latin *clavis*, a key; the custom having originated when Agricola discovered that Ptozoton—i.e., Burghhead—afforded the grand military key to the north of Scotland.

It would not be right to close this notice of the Hogmanay festivities in Scotland without alluding to the doings of the Guisards, or Guisers, who perform all kinds of antics in the merrymakings of New Year's Eve. Dressed up in fantastic attire, they not only sing a selection of songs, but perform a grotesque drama, called "Galatian." Sir Walter Scott, who was a lover of old customs, generally had a set of Guisers to perform this play before his family both at Ashiestiel and Abbotsford.

River Fishing in Carolina.

IN the black waters of the Edisto, rising in the "middle country" of South Carolina from springs of clear and delicious water, our trout, and rock, and jack, and perch bite as lively as crickets, and pull as heavily and with as much activity as any fish do in any portion of the Republic. The Edisto River is a bold, deep, considerable stream, abounding with islands covered with (the *Fagus*) beech, the *Alba quercus* (the white oak), the pine (*Pinus palustris*), the *Magnolia grandiflora* (magnolia), and any other smaller trees of less note, but in the general aspect they offer a panoramic *coup d'œil* to these islands which invite their visiting sportsmen to go on shore and enjoy their *siestas*, spend their nights, use "old John Barleycorn" with a freedom that "disturbs with mirth the drowsy ear of night," and sets agog the "moping owl that to the moon complains of such hunting wassailers wandering near her secret bower, molest her ancient, solitary reign."

Now we allude to our Southern bird of this species—the hooting, whooping owl, and occasionally the screech owl. The great white or snowy owl seldom ventures so far in Dixie, though I have seen one specimen in this State, and one or two in Rapides Parish, in Louisiana. These birds all have curiosity, and soon come up to bivouac, to see and hear the news, and never fail to join in camp revelry, and laugh and hurrah like the rest of the company. The owl, however, never makes free, but keeps by, watching passing events. I have sometimes known that they enjoyed these (to them) extra *soirées*. The owl was, by the ancient people, considered a bird of wisdom, and he was promoted by Minerva, and engraved upon her shield; but the demoralized modern people look upon her as an omen of evil, a harbinger of misfortune, and among the vulgar dreaded and hated. So it is "Oretenus," but I pass her on her parole, in contradistinction to the general verdict of the "*brutum fulmen*," on the assurance of Audubon, who asserts that she possesses a large share of the organ of philoprogenitiveness.

Well, we went to the Edisto, and in company with a nice party—carrying fishing tackle, guns, and many other descriptions of groceries; paramount, John Barleycorn, tobacco—the Virginia tobacco plant—yes, and the celebrated "Perique" (smoking tobacco), made in its highest perfection

in the parish of St. James, Louisiana—and after a liberal potation at the island in honour of Bacchus, old John Barleycorn, and Minerva, we sat down to a hearty meal of boiled trout, fried perch, and hashed jack fish, or, as the French would say, *Attacapas*, pronounced "Tuckapaw," or man-eaters.

Then we drew forth, with pious regard and in solemn form, our meerschaums, and, filling them with Perique tobacco, filled the island atmosphere with an exhalation that would have thrown the Count of Monte Cristo higher into the upper spheres of an Elysian phantasy than his far-famed "Hatchis" ever did. Say nothing of your Powhatsans or your Durhams. They are nowhere; they are mere incorporeal hereditaments, and as far behind the times as old Rip Van Winkle was after his passing through his twenty years of hybernation on Tom Clingman's mountains in old North Carolina. Thanks to the Great Architect for giving us tobacco; for, taken in moderation, it calms restlessness, and produces a state of languor of a most agreeable class, inclining to repose upon a series of delightful phantasmagorias, which elevate the soul, calm the senses, and relieve us of all worldly anxiety and selfishness.

We had a long, flat-bottomed barge, with a fine tent over it; tables, benches, curtains and furniture for the expedition, and three bateaux for the division of our party, and our barge was our store-ship. Took about two hundred pounds of fine fish, the trout averaging from one pound and a half to five pounds, the jack about the same, and the perch from three-quarters of a pound to a pound and a half. Killed several squirrels, smelled a bruin (bear), and snubbed an alligator. The waters abound with them, and the swamps have plenty of bear, but are hard to get at on account of the dense cane-brakes and wide swamps. In the latter part of our first day's sport an old schoolmate and his angling civilian fell in with us; and just as I had joined them in a bateau I changed my live bait and put a copper frog, which exceedingly disgusted the angling civilian. I got a rise, and pulled out a five-pound jack from under his canoe.

"See, Joe, you talk too much, and make such a noise you'll scare the fish away;" but I continued talking and spitting the juice of my Virginians' delight into the river. They backed off, and proceeded on down the river, singing "My Poor Lucy Neal." I soon took five or six more, and being desirous of disabusing them of the idea of scaring fish by talking or moving the waters, which I did as soon as I reached, by commencing to catch them as soon as I boarded them, greatly to their annoyance. They finally "surrendered at discretion," and went into a good old family running conversation, the *onus probandi* of which was the "likelihood of rainy weather." We were successful, however, and towards sunset my old friend, Joshua Keadle, joined the association with a large supply of fish, butter, fat bacon, and three gallons of buttermilk. A hearty hand-shaking, and "Well done," smartly connected with "Here's luck," for—

"Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin'

When heavy dragged we pine and grievin',
 But oil'd by thee
 The wheels of life gae down hill scrievin'
 Wi' rattling glee."

We got in shore, as I said, and concluded from the cloudy appearance that we were going to have a bad night. By one consent we stretched our tent on the island, staked it down, our servants got all things ready, and gave us a fine supper; and, after smoking, three played violins and another accompanied us with his guitar, until the owls, finding themselves repudiated, withdrew from our society, and low, distant, reverberating thunder began, at about eight miles away to the south-west, getting louder and coming closer, until the whole covey got in, and it began to rain about ten o'clock p.m.

This "raised a corner" in the grocery department as far as old Barleycorn was concerned, and it was soon visible that the oftener we paid our respects to him the less we cared for the murky night beyond our pavilion; and it was also observable that hilarity was on the increase.

About this time, in the midst of the general *rôle* of discoveries that we had pitched our tents under an immense dead tree that was old, rotten, and hanging right over our sleeping-lodge, this required another invocation to Bacchus and Old John Barleycorn, which gave us more confidence, and we began in the idea of predestination to think what was "to be or not to be." So two concluded that they would take the rain and be safe from the gravitating proclivities of that crooked dead tree, got out on the bank of the Edisto River, and, carrying two large benches, got under them, and prepared for a night's repose—the best they could hope for. One of the hands that was a son of temperance saw with much concern that grim Death was staring us all in the face who were under the tent, so went down to the water's edge, pulled out a canoe, turned it bottom upwards, got under it to keep the rain off, and went fast to sleep. Gradually, one after another, each individual began to hunt up and get in charge of Morpheus. The fiddling ceased, the drinking ceased, and the smoking ceased.

At three o'clock a.m. a loud noise came from the riparian proprietors. Each one in his sleep had tried to get as far as he could under the two benches they had got under to keep the rain off them, and the biggest man, being next to the island, pressed the rear-rank man or file-closer a little too hard in his sleep, and he gravitated like the stone of Sisyphus after the order of "*Facilis descensus avernæ*," or, in vernacular language, went down against the canoe sleeper, "knocking his canoe forked," scaring him to death, thinking an alligator was about to pre-empt on the dust from whence his body was made. He riz and made an effort, as old General Tom Woodward said when he was accused of running from the Indians when they got after him as he was out hunting near Tuskugee, Ala., during the Creek war—which he denied; but his friends pressed it home upon him so tightly that he said, "Boys, I didn't run, exactly; but hang me if I didn't do some mighty lofty walking." This canoe man spread all sail for high land; another hunted for the bottom of the Edisto, after the style of Sir John Falstaff

from the buck-basket into the River Thames; and the whole affair was accompanied with such a scrabble and noise that we in tent, fully expecting that bears had attacked them, and supposing them to be in *articulo mortis*, each grabbed for his gun, knocking each other down in every corner of the tent, over table, bench, and frying-pans of fish, &c., that two guns fired off in the tremendous dark, and one, seeing a dark body before him, and taking it for a bear, clubbed his gun, and knocked down the canoe man as he ran into the tent, as he thought, from the pursuit of the alligator.

Day broke slowly upon them in that buck island, and as the morning rays began to illuminate that tent, each man therein had both barrels of his gun loaded, cocked, and drawing his bead on his friend to the left, who stood squatted in the corners as low as they could, so as to catch the line of the horizon. A rapid explanation ensued, arms in the tent were grounded, the "long roll" was beaten, the wounded looked after, the party assured that no bears were likely to invade them, and there was another corner in the groceries, and each one giving his intellectual views of what was the matter.

We got a whaling breakfast, and put in down the Edisto with heavy weather on our port bow, sails furled, and running under top square sail. The rain was intermitting from heavy to Scotch mists. The admiral telegraphed for a board of visitors, and as the Edisto was muddy and rising, though trout were still patronizing our party liberally, we arrived at Winborn Island, where the crew were paid off, dismissed honorably, and adjourned *sine die*.

OUR readers will no doubt remember the announcement of the discovery some time since of a specimen of *Archaeopteryx lithographicus* in the Jurassic beds of Solenhofen. As but one specimen of this most remarkable fossil bird was previously known, and that specimen an imperfect one, there was of course no little desire on the part of paleontologists to secure this second one, and to have the honour of describing more fully the bird which has proved to be so important in connecting those two apparently different classes of the animal kingdom, the birds and the reptiles. Letters and telegrams bidding for the fossil poured in upon the fortunate collector, who wisely refused at first to sell, and has only recently parted with his treasure. The purchaser of the specimen is Dr. Otto Folger, President of the Freie Deutsche Hochstift, who paid for it the sum of 35,000 marks, or about 8,500 dollars. It is presumed that it will be handed over to some eminent German paleontologist for description, and the scientific public are anxiously looking forward to the publication of a memoir upon it. The remains in question are said to be in several particulars more perfect than those now in the British Museum, which have until recently been unique, and which have engaged, at different times, the attention of the most noted British paleontologists, among whom in the first rank are Professors Owen and Huxley.

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Dutch the Diver:

The Tale of some Sunken Ships.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XLIX.—LAURÉ'S LEGACY.



WHEN Lauré had swung down by the ropes hanging from one of the davits, he felt that he had outwitted himself, for the boat was not beneath his feet, and he was getting exhausted by his efforts.

"I shall have to let go," he muttered; "and in the darkness I shall never reach the boat again."

He swung himself to and fro, and struggled hard to reach the boat, but though he nearly touched it each time, he was never near enough to trust himself to loose his hold; and with the perspiration running down his face, and his hair bristling with horror, he began to thoroughly realize that his long rest in bed had weakened him terribly. The thought was horrible now that he had been brought face to face with it—that he who had been so carefully laying his plans for the destruction of others had been caught in his own trap, and was himself called upon to die. The idea was horrible. He was not fit to die. When roused by his passions to fight desperately, he could, perhaps, have faced death with a certain amount of manly composure; but now swinging at the end of this rope, to hold on till he could cling no longer, and then plunge suddenly into the sea, to feel the black rushing and thundering waters close over his head—it was too horrible to be borne.

He made a desperate struggle to get his legs up, and cling with them to the rope, but his strength was gone, and he only weakened himself; and hanging now at the full stretch of his arms, feeling, as

the sinews of his wrists seemed ready to crack, that any moment he must leave go, and then—

The thought was too horrible. He could not face death; sooner must he shriek for help, and forego his revenge—anything to be saved.

His lips parted, and he tried to yell loudly, but a harsh gurgle was all that came now from his dry throat. He tried again and again, but horror had paralyzed him, and he could do nothing but pant hoarsely like one in a nightmare, and believe that, after all, this was but some fearful dream from which he would awaken, as he often had before, bathed with perspiration, and shivering with dread.

At last he tried to close his starting eyes, and hide from his distorted vision the horrible resemblance of the davit above him to the gallows, as he swung to and fro by the rope. But even this relief was denied him, for it seemed as if the whole muscular strength of his body was condensed in his arms, by which he clung to the fall, and power had left him to perform any other act than that of clinging for life. The deadly sense of terror increased, and with men at either end of the vessel ready to come to his help—men who by the slightest effort of will could have saved him. He felt that he must die. He would have called them to his help now, regardless of the exposure of his plans, but it was too late; he could do no more than hold on, and wait till he fell.

No torture could possibly have been greater than that felt by this wretch, as he softly swung to and fro within a few inches of the safety he had provided, and yet unable to reach it. A thousand thoughts rushed through his brain, but they were mostly regrets that he had been unable to compass his revenge; that he had neglected his opportunities when he might have made himself the master of Hester, seeing how thoroughly he had her in his power; and his bared teeth glistened in the darkness as a wave curled, and, plashing against the side of the schooner, sent forth a phosphorescent flash.

And now he told himself it was all over; he must die unrevenged, unable to make a single struggle; for the last moments had come, his muscles were relaxing, the sense of terror was growing more dull, and he must fall. His eyes were staring straight up at the davit, now black above his head, just faintly seen through the darkness, and it seemed more than ever the instrument of his death as the slipping rope for a moment scorched his hands, his eyes convulsively closed as the strain on the muscles of his arms ceased, and he fell.

But not to plunge into the black waters beneath him, and only a few feet from where he had hung; for the wave that curled against the side, and with its phosphorescent glare showed his distorted fea-

tures, swept the boat beneath his feet, and he sank all of a heap in the bows, to lie there motionless as the boat swayed about.

For he was utterly prostrate, and it was some minutes before he could realize that he was still alive.

When, however, by slow degrees the feeling came upon him that he was safe, no thanks rose to his cracked, dry lips, but a smile of malignant satisfaction; for revenge was still open to him, and as soon as he could recover himself somewhat he might put his plan in execution.

For fully half an hour Lauré lay there crouching in the bows of the boat waiting for the strength that would enable him to achieve his nefarious ends; while the watch hung drowsily over the bulwarks, and those below slept peacefully, in ignorance of the horrible fate that was in store.

At last, like some deadly monster uncoiling its folds, the Cuban began to move, and his first attempt was to reach a bottle of spirits, from whose gurgling throat he drank with avidity, the potent fluid giving him the restoration he sought. Then, as the blood began to tingle in his veins, he sat up, looked round, and gently chafed his benumbed arms.

A slight motion in the forepart of the ship roused him to the necessity for immediate action; and now with eager haste he cautiously felt about, and placed the galvanic battery in a convenient spot, took hold of the reel of fine silk-covered wire, arranged it so that it was not entangled, and then, having assured himself that all was right, he took out his knife and cut the boat's painter, floating now gently away in the wake of the schooner, while, as he did so, he let the wire run rapidly out so that a connection was kept up.

There must have been at least a hundred yards of wire, and the schooner glided away so gently that there was never any stress on the frail metal cord, till the last rings ran off the reel, when Lauré, with a cry of exultation, checked the progress softly, and felt for the wire's end.

The schooner could hardly be distinguished now, and there was not a moment to lose, for if the wire were tightened till it dragged on the boat it must part; so with trembling eagerness the Cuban twisted the slight metal strand twice round his left hand, while with his right he placed the end against the brass connection of the plates in the battery.

The work was instantaneous.

As he touched the connection with the tiny point of copper, there was a hissing noise in the jar, a little point of light darted at the end of the wire, and simultaneously a hundred yards away in the darkness there was a tremendous flash, the darkness was illuminated with a fountain of sparks, which rose high in the air, driven by a fan-like wave of flame; the fire curved over, and the sparks fell hissing into the sea.

As the flame rose, spreading wider and wider, there was a roar as of thunder, a rush as of the wind in a tempest struck Lauré, the boat rocked to and fro, shipping no small amount of water, and the wire twisted round the Cuban's hand cut and bit into the flesh ere it snapped short off.

But he did not feel the pain, and saw not the danger to which he was exposed as he gazed straight beyond him at the doomed ship, and exulted in the wild shriek of horror that he had heard as the noise of the explosion died away.

He heard no more, for an awful silence fell upon the ocean, now blacker than ever; and rising up in the boat, he held out one hand, shaking his fist in the direction where a faint glow told him of burning fragments of the wreck, and then with a shriek of exultation he cried—

"Sink, sink, with your accursed freight! Who wins now?"

He tottered as he spoke, and though straining his voice to hurl out his curse at the schooner and those on board, it was but a feeble cry, and he fell back senseless over the thwarts, to lie in the bottom of the boat, with the water that had been shipped washing over him.

CHAPTER L.—THE CATASTROPHE.

THE occupants of the cabin had sat long that night, and then separated, feeling low-spirited and heavy, as if some fresh trouble was in store; but Bessy had said good-night to Meldon, with her hands resting lovingly in his, and she did not shrink away when he pressed his lips to her forehead.

It had been arranged that the remains of the dead should be committed to the deep next day, and at last all had retired, after the captain and Dutch had heard the doctor's report of Lauré's state, which caused them some uneasiness.

If Lauré recovered, they felt that much trouble was in store.

But there was not the faintest suspicion of danger: trusty men were at the look-out and helm, and it had been arranged that Dutch was to take turns with the doctor and captain to visit the deck during the night, the doctor having his patient to watch. Then there was Rasp, too, who would be on the move several times during the night, and all promised well.

And so the time wore on till Dutch, who had lain down in his clothes, rose and kissed his sleeping wife, as she lay there peacefully dreaming. All was very still, and on reaching the deck he found the darkness intense; but, guided by the faint glow from the binnacle lantern, he went aft to where Lennie was softly crooning to himself some old ditty about "Coming back to Saïrey in the good ship *Jane*."

"Yes, sir, all right," said the sailor. "The breeze keeps nice and steady, only it's like sailing in a tar barrel, it's so awful black."

Dutch went forward, and found Sam Oakum leaning with his elbows on the bulwark, matched by his companion on the other side of the bowsprit gazing straight out ahead.

"Right as nails, sir," said the old sailor; "only I was a thinking, being a man as never used it, if this here looked as black in the sunshine as it do now, what a fortune a man might make in bottles o' ink. You might go on filling 'em up, sir, for ever and ever, amen, and there'd be plenty left to sail the ships in all the same."

"It is black, Sam," said Dutch; "and I often

wonder that you sailors are not afraid of being run down, or of running into some other vessels."

"There's plenty o' room," said Sam; "and as to being afraid, what's the use? We're too busy. 'Course there is a collision sometimes, but not often, thank goodness."

"Keep a sharp look-out," said Dutch, turning to go.

"Ay, ay, I'll keep a sharp look-out," said the old fellow. "Lord, it's ticklish work, sailing with all this silver aboard, and I shall be glad when we're safe in. How's the prisoner, sir?"

"I'm going down to see," replied Dutch; and, going to the hatch, he descended, to find Rasp sleeping soundly, and the lamp burned down to a dim light, that did not show the state of the Cuban's berth.

Dutch shoved the old diver roughly, and he started up, muttering, while, as the former turned up the lamp, he started with surprise.

"Where is—"

The words had not left his lips when there was a tremendous concussion, a deafening roar, and the two men were thrown down, to struggle up again, with the air of the little cabin filled with a strange choking vapour, which nearly suffocated them before they had staggered up the steps, to sink helplessly on the deck, now covered with burning fragments which kept showering down.

As Dutch fell, stunned and confused, on the forepart of the deck, it seemed to him that he heard wild shrieks and cries for help from the direction of the stern cabins, but he was too helpless to comprehend what had taken place till he heard Oakum shrieking to him and shaking his arm.

"Are you killed, Mr. Dutch?" said the old fellow.

"Ah, do say you aint."

"I don't think I'm hurt, Sam," faltered Dutch, as he struggled to his feet. "I feel stunned, though," and he clung to the old sailor to keep from falling backwards.

"Here's poor old Rasp killed," exclaimed Oakum, "and the ship sinking. Quick, in the boat."

"You're an obstinate old liar," exclaimed Rasp, staggering to his feet. "I aint killed. Who's been a-doing of this?"

"Here, quick, Oakum!" exclaimed Dutch, who, now that he could think, had his first thoughts for his wife and friends—"the ship must be going down. Help me to reach those astern."

"There's no getting to them, if they're alive," exclaimed Oakum; "the whole of the schooner's blown out amidships."

"Ahoy!" there came a voice from beyond the great black gulf in the centre of the schooner, which now began to blaze.

"Who's that? Ahoy!" shouted Dutch. "Captain Studwick?"

"Right! Who's with you there?"

"Oakum, Rasp, and one of the men," cried Dutch. "Who's with you?"

"I think all," replied the captain, shouting across the gulf.

"Is my wife—Miss Studwick—safe?" faltered Dutch; and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, he muttered a prayer of thankfulness.

The question then arose—was the schooner sinking?

"I think not," shouted the captain; for a disposition was shown to get out the boats. "If she was sinking, she would not begin to blaze like that down in the hold. It seems to me that the explosion struck upwards, and that she is sound below—for the present."

And so it proved; for the dynamite had ripped up the deck, and snapped off the mainmast as if it had been the stem of a flower, and it now lay alongside, with such of its ropes as were out of water blazing.

Not a moment was to be lost, and buckets being brought into requisition, the flames were attacked, for portions of the wreck below began now to blaze fiercely. One of the pumps, too, was set to work, and for long hours nothing was heard but the hissing of the flames as they were attacked by the water; but all that could be done was to keep them from increasing, and when at last the morning broke, it was to show two groups, one forward, the other astern, sullenly drawing buckets of water and dashing them into a hissing gulf of fire in the centre of the schooner, from which rose a column of black smoke, to spread overhead and form a cloud like a funeral pall for the unhappy ship.

As the wind wafted the smoke on one side, Dutch waved his hand in token of encouragement to his wife, who stood with Bessy by the wheel, their task being to keep the ship's head in one direction, so that the flames and heated vapour should not be driven astern. But all was done now in a helpless, duty-driven fashion, for all on board now realized the fact that it was only a matter of hours before the fire would eat its way through the side, and the work they tried so hard to do would be accomplished by the ship sinking beneath the waves.

"It's of no use," said Captain Studwick, at last. "Dutch Pugh, Oakum, lower down that boat, and come aft."

This was done in a steady, deliberate manner, although at any moment a fresh explosion might have taken place, and the schooner gone down. And into the boat Oakum, Rasp, the sailor, and Dutch lowered themselves, paddling it along the side, and joined their companions in misfortune aft.

As Oakum made fast the painter, and they all stood on the deck, Captain Studwick exclaimed—

"Where is Lauré? We must not leave him to perish."

"Is he not with you?" said Dutch.

"No," said the captain, bitterly.

"Has the poor wretch, then, been blown up in explosion?"

"Heaven knows!" cried Mr. Parkley; "but if he is missing, that explains all. It is his work."

"It was those blowing-up cartridges o' yourn," growled Oakum.

"Of course it was, stupid," snarled Rasp, turning on the old sailor fiercely; "but the cartridges wouldn't go off by themselves, would they?"

"You said he was better, doctor," said the captain.

"Yes, so much so that the change was puzzling."

"This was his work, then," cried the captain.

"He was well enough to take some terrible revenge upon us."

"And to perish himself in accomplishing it," said Dutch.

"Don't know that," said the captain. "One of the boats has gone."

"But it may have been destroyed in the explosion."

The captain shook his head and walked to the side where the ropes and blocks hanging from the davits showed plainly enough that a boat had been lowered down.

As he pointed to this, the diabolical plot was made perfectly manifest, and its objects saw plainly enough how the villain had compassed their destruction.

"And I was so deceived," exclaimed the doctor, stamping upon the deck in his rage. "The scoundrel was ill at first, but the latter part of the time it was subterfuge. Dutch Pugh, this is my fault. I must go back to hospital to learn my profession."

Just then the flames came towards them in a body, beating them back, but only to be followed by another tremendous roar, for the fire had reached some blasting powder that had been placed on board.

CHAPTER LI.—SAM OAKUM'S NARRATIVE.

I'M not pretending to give a full account of what happened aboard our ship, but just put in a word here and there. One of the strongest impressions, as you land people call it, is of the explosion and fire, and what followed, and that I'm going to tell my way.

As you've been told, there come one night a tremendous roar. Accident or done on purpose I could not tell, but there was the ship afire, and the smoke in a steady column rolling up afterwards.

All at once the skipper darts forward, shouting, "Lend a hand here, and we shall save her yet!" and for the next quarter of an hour no one would have thought there had been a mutiny, for we were all working away side by side against what was an enemy to both parties; and bucket after bucket was poured into the burning hole, but with no more effect than if the buckets had been thimbles.

The fire and smoke came rolling up, and rising higher and higher, while, as if to fan the flames, a sharp wind blew seemingly from all four quarters at once, making the flames roar again; and first one, and then another, threw his bucket into the fire, and began running below for provisions to put in the two boats.

I think Mr. Dutch was the last man to drop his bucket; and that was when the flames had risen and risen in a column of fire to lick the rigging, and then began leaping from rope to rope, and sail to sail, till the mizen was one blaze of light, brightening the sea far and wide, till it looked like so much golden oil, without a ripple upon it anywhere.

All at once I missed Mr. Wilson, but he appeared directly after; and I knew what he had been doing—letting loose his birds; and there were the poor little things fluttering about, and uttering strange cries, as they circled round and round the flames, some only to scorch themselves and fall in; but, as

he said, it was better to set them free than leave them there in their cages to be burned.

I don't care who the man may be, but it is a hard struggle for any one to see two roads open to him, the first leading to life, and the second to a horrible death, and for him to force himself to take the last one. I'm not going to blame Rolls, nor I aint a-going to blame Lennie. It was only natur's first law when Rolls says to me just one word, and give his head a nod seaward. "Hot!" says he, and he took to the boat. Then, "Come along, matey," says Lennie; and he takes arter the other—and that was two gone. As for Mr. Wilson, he was so taken up with his poor birds, that he didn't seem to care a bit about himself, till I goes up to him and says—

"Haden't you better try and make the boat, sir?" for the others seemed quite helpless with the shock.

"Make the boat, my man?" he says in a puzzled sort of way. "No; I don't think I could make a boat."

"Swim arter it then," says I, for it had pushed off. "No," he says, mournfully; "I can't swim a stroke."

"More shame for you," I says. And then I felt so savage, that I goes up to the fat steward as was sitting crying on the deck of course, and I says, says I, giving him a sharp kick—

"Get up," I says, "will you! You're always a-crying."

"Oh, Mr. Oakum," he says, blubbering like a calf—"Oh, Mr. Oakum, to come to this!"

"Go overboard, then," I says, savagely; "for now you've pumped all that hot water out of your hold, you can't sink."

Now all this time the fire was roaring away, and sending a glow in all directions for far enough round, while the sparks kept on dropping like a shower. It was a beautiful sight, in spite of the horror; and I couldn't help looking at it a minute, till I turned round and saw Mr. Meldon standing quite still, looking down upon Miss Bessie, who was on her knees by her brother's side. But as I was looking, she got up, pale and quiet, and looked first at me, and then at Mr. Meldon, and then she says, quickly—

"Why do you both waste time? Why do you not swim after the boat?"

"And you?" said Mr. Meldon, in a slow, husky way.

She did not answer, only turned for a moment towards where her brother lay with his head on a cushion, and pointed to him with a sad smile, and then, holding out her hand to me as she sank upon her knees again by her brother's side, she said—

"God bless you, Mr. Oakum! Good-bye."

I took her pretty little white hand, and kissed it, and then stood back; for she held out her hand to Mr. Meldon, and he took it and kissed it, and then sank on his knees by her side, holding her hand tightly; and when she said once more, "Go!" he only smiled and kissed her hand again.

It was so still, in spite of the fluttering roar of the flames, that I could hear every word he said, as he almost whispered to her, "Bessy, darling, I'll never leave you."

The next moment her face was down in her other hand, and I could see that she was sobbing; so, feel-

ing all wet-eyed myself, I turned away, when if there wasn't that fat steward blubbering away more than ever!

"Get up, will you?" I says; "I never did see such a thundering swab in my life as you are." But all he says was, "Oh, Mr. Oakum!"

"Miss Studwick is beckoning to you, Mr. Meldon," exclaimed Mrs. Dutch, suddenly; and turning they saw her upon her knees.

"Poor fellow!" muttered the doctor, almost in a whisper; but the young couple heard him, and stood watching anxiously, for though John Studwick's death was expected, they had hoped that he might first reach home.

For just as Bessy was bending over to speak to him, startled slightly by his lengthened silence, he turned to her and smiled lovingly and tenderly as his thin hand pressed hers.

"Kiss me, Bessy," he said, in a low, strange voice; and as she gazed at him with dilating eyes, and pressed her lips to his, he said gently, "The doctor!"

It was then that Bessy beckoned anxiously to Mr. Meldon, who came hastily across the black deck, and knelt down, taking the hand feebly stretched out to him.

"Not the pulse, doctor, the palm," says John Studwick, his face lighting up with a strange unearthly smile. "I'm not jealous now. Be kind to my darling sister. Good-bye."

As Miss Bessy burst into a fit of sobbing and lowered her head upon his breast, he laid his hand upon her glossy curls. Then seeing his father bending eagerly over him, he tried to raise his other hand, but it fell back, his lips formed the words "Good-bye" once more; and, as his eyes smiled up in his father's face, the lines around them gradually hardened, the pupils dilated in a fixed stare, and those who gazed down upon him knew that the spirit had fled to its long home.

Now, you know, I wouldn't have cared if that there fat stooard would only have kept out of my way; but there, the more trouble one was in, and the more he was wanted out of the way, the more he piped his eye, and got just where you didn't want him. He always was a nuisance from the day he first came on board, and, to make it more aggravating, he would look just as if he was made on purpose to kick.

"Why don't you get out of the way?" I says; for all this time I'd been turning over in my own mind a way to get out of the burning, if we could, and there was that great fat chap a-sitting on a hencoop that I wanted.

"Oh, Mr. Oakum!" he whines again. And then, the others helping me, we got a couple of loose spars overboard, and some rope to lash with, and a couple of hencoops; and as fast as Mr. Dutch, and the skipper, and the fat passenger, who seemed to have been warmed into life by the fire—as fast as they lowered the stuff down, I who was over the side, lashed it together, to make something like a raft. For them two as took the boat seemed too scared to come back.

I couldn't do much; there wasn't time, for the fire gained upon us; and now there was no one at the helm, the ship had swung round so that the

smoke and flame all came our way. I felt, too, that it was only to make life last another day or two, for there was no getting at any prog, as there wasn't a scrap of anything in the forksel; for I went down to see when I first thought of the raft. However, I shouted to them to lower down the water-breaker by the fore-mast, and they did, and then Mr. Wilson came over the side, and the fat stooard rolled down somehow, and I shook my head, for the raft went low on his side. At last there was only Mr. Dutch and Miss Studwick to come, and, partly by coaxing, partly by dragging, he had got the poor girl to the side, when she turned her head to take another look, as I thought, of the poor fellow lying dead there; and as Mr. Meldon stood there holding her, the pair showing out well in the bright light of the burning ship, I could not help thinking what a noble-looking couple they made, and then I shouts—"Lower away, sir;" when, as if startled by my words, Miss Studwick darted away from Mr. Meldon, when in a moment there came a roar as of thunder, the raft heaved and cracked under us, and beat against the side of the ship, while something seemed to strike me down, so that I lay half-stunned upon the grinding coops and spars.

But I contrived to get on my knees, struggling from under some heavy weight; and then, every moment getting clearer, I understood that the ship had blown up, and that Mr. Meldon must have been dashed from the gangway, and fallen on to me.

And Miss Studwick?

I dursn't ask myself the question again, but shoved the raft away, and began to paddle with a piece of board, so as not to be drawn down when the vessel sank. In place of being all bright light, it was now pitch darkness, except just here and there, where pieces of burning wood floated on the water, and then hissed and went out. From being so near, I suppose it was, we escaped anything falling upon us; and, feeling pretty safe at last from being drawn down, I was trying to make out the lines of the ship, by the smouldering hull beginning again to show a flame here and there, when a husky voice close by shouts out—"Ahoy!"

"Here," I cries, hailing; and the next moment we had Rolls aboard, and he says, says he, 'Sam, I was about done.'

"It's only put off another hour or two," I says. "And where's old Squintums?"

"On your weather-bow," says a gruff voice; and the boat was once more alongside.

Well, there was some comfort in doing one's best to the last; and Mr. Dutch began to feel Mr. Meldon about a bit; but he was coming to fast, and the first thing the captain wanted to do was to paddle back to the ship; and, thinking that we might pick up some pieces to lash to our raft, we gave way, dangerous as it was, though a very small sight worse than our present position. So we paddled up to the smoking mass, that I expected would settle down every moment; and then, getting hold of the side rope, Mr. Dutch, Mr. Meldon, and I got on deck, leaving Mrs. Dutch sobbing as if her heart would break.

It was not dark, for there was a little flame here and there, and in some places there was the glow

of a lot of sparks. But we hadn't come to look for that; and, as we stood there forward amongst the smoke, I felt my heart heave, as, with a groan that seemed to tear out of his chest, Mr. Meldon threw himself down by the figure he was looking for.

She seemed to have run back to throw herself upon her brother's body, and there she was, with her arms round him, and though pieces of burning wood lay all about, she did not seem to have been touched.

It was a sad sight, and in spite of all our troubles, I had a little corner left for the young fellow, who had clasped her in his arms, when he started up with a cry of joy.

"Here—water, Oakum, quick!" cried the skipper; and almost as he spoke, Miss Bessy gave a great sigh, and we gently lowered her on to the raft, when, getting hold of a bit of burning bulwark floating near, I squenched it out, and managed to lash it to us, so as to ease one side. Then we paddled slowly away, and lay by waiting for the morning, to get together more fragments, and make a better raft.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 212.)

A Miner's Camp.

"BOYS, do you notice how bright the stars are at this altitude?"

For some moments there was no reply from either of the other four weary miners, or rather prospectors, who were stretched before their camp fire, on one of the many plateaus that form the main divide of the Rocky Mountains. A hard day's work with pick and shovel in a prospect hole, had tired us so that even the usual camp fire jest and badinage was foregone. At last old George drawled out—

"Hank, how der yer account for it?"

"Don't know, George. Let's all smoke a little cigarette; and, Petee, you give us the science of it."

"Well, the science of it is very plain. We are above the timber, and on the snow line. Take Venus there, for instance—that very bright star. If you were looking at her from the plains, your vision would have to pierce ten thousand feet of air; but here you are looking at her from that altitude, and through a rarefied atmosphere that you can scarcely breathe in. Well, you all saw how it was to-day. There is Hank, the strongest of us, could not swing a pick for five minutes at a time. The air is so fine and rare that you lose breath, and of course it is easy for the eye to penetrate it. How unnaturally bright they seem! What would the dwellers below say if they could look at the beauty of the heavens as we are seeing them to-night? I doubt whether Ingersol, with all his infidelity, could stand on these rocky heights, look at those glittering, beautiful worlds, and deny the existence of a God. There is some great power, some divine hand guiding them. Take, for instance, the moon. See, she is just peeping up from behind that peak, her orbit—Hillo! what is the row now? Here come the pack mules as if they were crazy from eating locoo, or as if the devil was at their heels. What's up?"

Old George, after peering through the darkness, stepped toward the tent, with the remark, "Git yer

rifles, it's varmint. Come away from the fire inter the dark."

The three pack mules and little Jock the donkey stood near the tent, showing every sign of terror. Harry remarked—

"There is something wrong, for there is that box of crackers open, and little Jock is too badly scared to steal them. We are on the old Ute reservation, and I would not be surprised if some of them good boys were around. But what would an Indian want up here?"

Just then there was a sharp clatter of hoofs over the rocks, the mules dashed into the darkness, and a huge shambling mass of hair approached the cracker box and upset it. Nobody fired; it was not from fear, but sheer astonishment. In another instant Old George's rifle cracked, bruin gave a sharp growl of pain, stood up on his hind legs, only to receive four more balls and fall over the pile of crackers, changing the colour, giving them a new flavour, and scattering them to the four winds in his death agony. George, sticking a new shell into his Sharps, walked up to the bear, growling out—

"Well, if ever I seed such imperance in all my long life in these yer rock piles, a bar coming within a hundred feet of a camp fire. Mule Ear Bill used ter tell about how he went ter bed one night and saw er shadder come atween his fire and his tent, and when he looked out a big grizzly war a-setten thar warming himself. He didn't shoot, outer respect to the bar's feelings; and if he hed had champagne he would hev asked him in ter take a drink; but he hed nothin' except a bottle of Mexican Frank's whisky, and he didn't like ter offer that kind of stuff ter a bar; for it was rifle, and the bar might hev thought he was wounded in the neck, and then yer know he would hev been dangerous. I allers thought Mule Ear Bill was a liar when he told that story, but I believe him now. That pesky varmint war after that donkey colt, and that drew him onter the crackers, and a nice mess he made of them; but, boys, he hez got a mate around here somewhar, and to-morrow we will hev a bar hunt. Them ere mules will take care of themselves, and if that colt gets chawed up it's no loss; he steals everything about the camp—sugar, flour, green coffee, and yesterday he stole all the dried apples. I was a hopin' they would swell up and kill him, like the Government mule what eat a bushel; but they didn't—he only grunted and yanked his back up and down. Harry, sing that song about holdin' out yer hand to a brother that's down, and we'll turn in."

And Harry's splendid tenor voice ringing out through the clear air was our lullaby, and the next morning we threw off our blankets on hearing the same voice singing—

"Morn amidst the mountains."

A hearty breakfast of fresh bear steak, corn dodgers, and coffee, and we were ready for the hunt. Hank, Harry, and Cooper took the gulch, whilst George and I climbed the spur, intending to go down into the valley. We had proceeded but a short distance, when George stopped his dissertation upon the proper way to attack *Ursa horribilis*, or his nearly as dangerous cousin, the cinnamon, and said—

"Petee, we will strike the lake, and if one on us had a shot gun we'd get er goose or bunch of ducks for a change from buck. No use er wasting ball-cartridges and shooting just one at a time."

Knowing that I was the one meant to have the shot-gun, I started back, and exchanged my Sharps for his No. 10 Parker. My old sporting friend, Poist, used to say that when I pulled the trigger of my little English gun I shut my eyes. Well, those were tender-foot days, and I had no faith in the gun; but when I bring a Parker to my shoulder I know there is a breech behind the shell. Crossing the spur, we came in sight of the valley, a Rocky Mountain park five miles long and half as wide—one of Nature's beauty spots—surrounded on all sides by granite walls and towering peaks. The lake gleamed like silver in the sunshine, while three or four mountain streams, with their borders of quacking aspen, added to the beauty of the scene. From the height on which we stood, and through a gap in the peaks, but many miles from us, we could distinctly see the mountain of the Holy Cross. Old George said—"When er Mexican sees that hill he allers takes off his hat." He replied—

"Well, George," suiting the action to the word, "so do I; and why should we not? it is the emblem of our faith."

It was my second sight of the Cross. Once before, in early spring, while working a placer at the extreme head of the Arkansas, and north-west of the Twin Lakes—the most beautiful spot in America, if not in the world—the melting snow raised the little stream, washed away our sluice-boxes, and drove us out of the gulch. We concluded to cross the range by way of the Indian trail near Mount Lincoln, and work down to the new Utah silver loads on the Rio Dolores. Late in the evening we came in sight of the mount. The snow had melted off the sides, but the gulches forming the Cross were filled with the winter's accumulation. It stood out at that time a great white cross. The gloom of evening had already settled over the valley and the cañons, but the last rays of the setting sun struck the mountain, and as the fading beams flashed over the sparkling snow it looked as if it was studded with diamonds and brilliant gems; while surrounding it on all sides were the great black hills, with their snow-capped peaks. No wonder that the Mexican should take off his hat to a scene so sublimely suggestive of his faith. It required no great stretch of the imagination to fancy the hundred dark hills and peaks surrounding it the stone roof of some grand old cathedral, and the mountain of the Cross the great dome towering above it with the glittering emblem. I thought it equally as beautiful, and far more impressive in its gloomy grandeur than its heavenly prototype, the constellation of the Southern Cross, that flashes its rays over the waters of the Pacific.

Forcing our way through the low, hanging branches of the pignons (mind, not piñons or pin-yons, but *pignons*, and for the proper spelling I refer you to any Spanish or Mexican scholar), we soon struck the underbrush of wild black currant bushes that skirted the base of the mountain. While leisurely sauntering along, and picking up the over-ripe fruit—for it was late fall—we were brought to

a sudden halt by an ugly growl and a tawny mass in a small pignon tree. Old George spoke in quick tones—

"A Mexican lion. Take his eyes with your shot-gun, and don't miss!"

Dropping on one knee, I took a quick aim, and fired both charges of buckshot at the ugly eyes, and as I jumped behind a large tree the wounded and enraged brute landed on the spot where I had knelt. But the Parker had done its work. The whole face was torn to pieces, and, as we afterwards saw, the eyes were blown out. Old George, with his rifle almost in the animal's ear, fired, and said—

"I could hev killed him when he jumped, but I was afeard of hitten you. That 'ere shot consarn hurt him powerfully. I hev often heard they were good for puttin' out a b'ar's eyes, and they work just as well on them beasts. When you hev a varmint's eyes out, you hev just as good as got his hide. This yer is a nice skin, but yer spoilt his head. Them 'ere shot-guns spoil peltries. Now, that 'ere way of dropping down on yer knee to shoot aint right. I have hern tell about them fancy shots layin' on thar backs, and shootin' atween thar knees and toes, and sich like; but it won't do out here. If a beast jumps he has got yer down of yer own account, and yer didn't draw yer knife afore yer fired. I allers wants steel atween my teeth when I tackle sich brutes."

Hanging the beautiful skin of the jaguar, *Felis onca*, on a tree, we pushed down into the valley after antelope; but the shy creatures kept a mile between us, and, as we had plenty of meat in camp, we did not take time to decoy them. We saw a fine specimen of *Mephitis chinga*. I wanted George to shoot, but he said he "wouldn't waste a ball on the durned thing;" and, as I had caught one in a rabbit trap in my schoolboy days—well, I thought I had a rabbit, and grabbed, and it offended me, "An offence that in its rankness smelled to heaven." While driving cattle over the great plains from the Huerfano to Dodge City, I have seen many hundreds of them. That hunter's paradise, the Valley of the Gunnison, is also infested with them. On one occasion we were returning from Dodge to the mountains in the cars. A young lady sitting near exclaimed, "Oh! see, see there! What a pretty little animal! What is it?"

Her question was answered by a general slamming down of the car windows, and an elderly lady exclaiming, "Oh! what a horrid smell!"

After shooting a few curlew we reached the lake; and what a sight for a duck hunter! They were massed closer than I had ever seen them before; and I have shot them in the ducks' heaven, the Tullare Lakes, on the Southern Pacific coast.

Ducks in variety: brant, *Bernicla brenta*, and geese, *Bernicla canadensis*, out on the lake; mud-hens, *Rallus crepitans*, along the shallows; snipe, *Gallinago Wilsonii*, and curlew, *Numenius arquata*, on the sand. Professor Hayden's party was in this valley about a year ago, and the air is still impregnated with scientific names: hence the above.

The mountain parks are the summer home, the breeding-ground, of the wild fowl. Every variety is here. Will some naturalists explain how the fish-duck manages to live on these lakes or ponds, where

there are no fish?—for here they do live during the breeding season; and a young fish-duck shot late in the fall, just before migrating time, is a delicacy. The flesh is absolutely free of the flavour, for it has never yet had the opportunity to taste fish. In speaking of lakes or ponds in which there are no fish, I am not alluding to the Twin Lakes, for I have been there with rod and line; but I mean the large, shallow ponds lower down.

In the partially dried-up lakes of the great San Luis Park, curlew can be shot by the waggon-load.

I have driven cattle along the roads after a heavy shower, and out of every mud-puddle the snipe would rise by hundreds, but not until the cattle's hoofs were splashing among them.

Approaching the shores of the lake, the ducks—not timid, but evidently suspicious—swarm out until a great bunch were huddled about one hundred and fifty feet from me. Old George swung his hat and halloed, the bunch took wing, and I sent both barrels after them. There was a terrific fluttering and sputtering, a rise from other parts of the lake, and a flight of mud-hens that fairly clouded the surface. A round dozen of ducks dropped into the water with their feet up. Before the smoke had cleared away, I realized that such a shot was not sport, but something that any sportsman ought to be ashamed of. Standing on the lake shore, I contrasted it in my mind with the real sport of other days: the rise before daylight, and the train ride to the starting-point; the launch of the trim duck-boat, the thirty miles' float down one of America's most beautiful rivers—the Susquehanna—with its scenery of island, hill and dale—a scenery more varied and more beautiful, if not so grand, as that surrounding me. Then the occasional sight of a bunch of ducks, the vigorous paddling, and the cautious approach with the boat on her side upon game that was watching for you, and that made you use your nerve and skill to approach. Ah! that was sport; but this was pot-hunting. I was recalled to myself by old George—

"Waal, how are yer going ter git 'em out?"

Throwing off my buckskin, I plunged into the water, and soon had them piled on the shore. At this moment Hank and his party, who had made the circuit of the gulch, approached the lake. They were very surprised at seeing a man dressed in the suit of clothes that Adam wore before the fall prancing up and down on the sand to get up a circulation.

Thirteen ducks! Well, it was the second shot of that kind that I had made, and I promised myself it would be the last, unless I was pressed for food. The first was while hunting on the Susquehanna. We had had a long, hard day's work, and but little game. Towards evening, while rounding the point of an island, we caught sight of a number of heads through the long grass. Quickly backing water, we ran into the lee of the island. I got out, crept up the bank, intending to get the first shot, and drive them down and over the boat, for my companions to take on the wing. Peering cautiously through the weeds, I could just see the heads. I pulled both triggers at once, and my ears were greeted with the old familiar quack! quack! of the tame duck. Rais-

ing up, I saw the most melancholy procession that ever greeted a sportsman's eye. They were marching up the bank, single file, some lame, others with their wings down, and others dragging along as best they could. When I got to the boat I found that Ed had picked up seven dead ones that had floated down to him, saying, "Well, it was a mistake, but, as they are killed, we may as well eat them. What business had tame ducks hiding in the grass in such a place?" I met him a week afterwards, and asked him how he liked ducks. He replied, "Don't say duck to me. I have been fed on duck, drake, and muscovy every day for a week."

Neither party having struck Bruin's trail, we concluded to return to camp, and exchange the hunter's weapons for the miner's tools—sport for hard work. It was my turn to cook. I concluded to give the boys broiled duck and bear soup. So, taking that inseparable friend of the miner—the Dutch oven—I filled it with clear water, choice bits of bear, the last onion in camp, potatoes, and, to flavour it, a few sage tops. The latter was a happy thought—an experiment in cookery. At dinner Hank took a spoonful, made a wry face, and remarked—

"There's something in that soup."

Harry, after tasting, set his tin cup carefully on the ground, looked at me reproachfully, and said—

"How did you manage to shoot a sage-hen up here this time the year? And why in thunder did you stick her in the soup when we've lots of good game?"

Cooper, after tasting, cut a slice of bear-steak, and preparing to toast it over the coals, said, "I prefer my bear straight—no mixing bear and sage-hen for me."

Old George, coming to my rescue, said, "Waal, boys, the cookin' is all right, but the cinnamon in the bar has spoiled the soup."

It was about as palatable as Smally's hasty plate of goose soup, in which he boiled a goose—web feet, inwards, and all—with a good sprinkling of feathers, and then fed the potful to the officers of a Pennsylvania militia regiment, to keep their courage up whilst they were within hearing, but not within reach, of Antietam's booming guns.

"There was something in that soup."

After a late dinner we went up to our mine to put in a couple of hours' work before bed-time. Harry and I started for a bucket of water. We had got half-way down to the brook, and were leisurely swinging the camp kettle between us, when, within two hundred yards, and coming directly towards us, was an immense cinnamon bear and a cub. She had caught sight of us first, and was in the act of rising up on her hind legs. We dropped our weapon—the camp kettle—and shot up that mountain on the jump. The kettle bounded down from rock to rock, but we did not wait to see the effect. I was thinking of the dead bear down in camp, and of the loving embrace I would get from this, his widow, if she caught me. Our breathless arrival at the mine stopped work, and, as the rifles were all down in the tent, we armed with picks, crowbars, and drills, and would have started for the bear, but George stopped us, saying, "Boys, yer fools! Thar's nothin' uglier than a b'ar with a cub. I never likes to tackle a b'ar at best, and if you go at that one with them

kind er tools, some on yer will get an ear chewed off. Now, mind!"

We afterwards found the camp kettle, pretty well dinged by the rocks; but never got a shot at the bear.

Chub Fishing in Winter.

IT has been truly said that there are proper times and seasons for all things; and most people, including not a few ardent fishermen, will maintain that the most unfit time for angling is during the winter months. From a certain point of view, such persons are right; for if by the term "fit" is meant, or in it is included, the most physically enjoyable time for this pastime, then of a truth the spring, summer, and autumn months are the best.

One of the great charms of fly-fishing for trout is the wandering along by the banks of a stream running through a pretty country, as most trout streams do, when nature is awakening from her winter's sleep, or is in her full summer's garb, or decked in the bright tints of autumn; and, to all but enthusiastic anglers, bank or punt fishing is only enjoyable on fairly warm and genial days. But the number of genuine votaries of the angle who look on "the take" as the grand criterion of the pleasure of a day's fishing, and heed not the kind of weather in which they exercise their craft so long as they exercise it successfully, is very considerable, and embraces especially those who make the humbler denizens of our waters their quarry. To them the winter months are the most enjoyable time for their favourite pursuit. The winter, for instance, is the best season for jack, perch, roach, and chub; for not only are more of these fish taken than at any other time, but those caught are in their best condition, and the largest of their species come to hook.

Outsiders, and those who affect to take the same view of angling as Dr. Johnson, may deride winter fishing and winter fishermen; but a good day's sport among the winter fish in the months of December, January, and February, is held in high estimation by the true brethren of the rod; and, however much the sentiment may be questioned, to them not the least of its charms are the difficulties and even the personal discomfort under which success is often achieved.

What may, in a certain sense, be called their drawbacks in almost all our out-door sports and pastimes really give a zest to them in healthy minds. Hunting and shooting are followed at no little personal inconvenience, and even danger; men row themselves into a state of perspirational solution, and play cricket under a burning sun; and yet the sympathy and pity of the outside public is not asked for or needed on behalf of the votaries of these and other pastimes. In like manner, if it pleases anglers to fish in keen weather, why should any one say them nay, or presume to despise or pity them if they pursue the sport they best love at a season of the year when it is at its best, notwithstanding atmospheric disagreeables?

The chub is both a summer and a winter fish, and, indeed, it is perhaps the only one of all our common kinds which can be captured all the year round with some bait or other; but in the winter

months it certainly gives the best sport. Of late years chub fishing in winter may be said to have become a distinctly recognized branch of the angler's art; and it would almost seem that previous generations of fishermen were hardly aware that during December and January more chub could be had than at any other time. However this may be, every winter now sees an increase of chub anglers, especially on the Thames; and during last month, till the recent frost set in, and afterwards "snow broth," detested of anglers, had discoloured the water and put the fish off their feed, a better winter chub-fishing season is hardly on record, large takes of fish being reported from all chubby districts—an unusually fine fish of 5 lbs. 6 oz. being among the captures at Weybridge.

But here a word or two ichthyologically about the fish itself. The chub, "whose neater name which some a chevin call," as Michael Drayton tells us, belongs to the large family of *Cyprinida*, or carps, and, according to some naturalists, he is assigned to a sub-genus of that family, distinguished as *Leucisci*, or "white-fish," and thus is a first cousin to the roach and dace and tiny minnow. Ichthyologically he is designated *Cyprinus Cephalus*, or *Leuciscus Cephalus*—the term *Cephalus*, which is only the Latinized form of the Greek *Kephalos*, signifying "a head," being given him because he is credited, or rather discredited, as having an abnormally large head.

Exception may be fairly taken to this nomenclature; for though the chub has a head somewhat larger in proportion than other fish of the carp family, it can hardly be said that it is disproportionately large *per se*. The chub has indeed been called the "large-headed dace," but a small or even medium-sized chub is so like a dace of like size, that unless one knows accurately the different marking of the fins, it is very difficult to distinguish the one from the other; and yet the dace is one of the most elegant and symmetrical of our fresh-water fish.

The learned Dr. Badham speaks with contempt of the "obese body, empty head, and inflated face" of the chub, and suggests that these characteristics "helped the Stratford bard to the simile" contained in the following lines:—

"I never saw a lean fool; the *chub-faced* god
Shines sleek with full-cramm'd fat of happiness."

Many fishermen, however, and ichthyologists too, will be inclined to think that the learned doctor's description of the chub is as libellous as his attribution of the above quotation to Shakspeare is incorrect; for it was Marston, the dramatist, and friend of Ben Jonson, who wrote the lines in his "Antonio's Revenge," and not the "Stratford bard."

But long before Marston, the poor chub had been nicknamed "big-head." Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers called him "cop" or "copp," evidently connected with *Caput*, *Kephalos*, *Cephalus*; the French call him *Chabot*; and the gentle Swedes term him *Kubb*, which signifies a "short, thick piece of wood," and, applied to the fish, is thus equivalent to the term "loggerhead," which Piscator gives the fish in "The Complete Angler." The Welsh follow in the same line, and with them the chub is *pen-ci*, "pen," which

means "a head;" while the Scotch call him "skelly," which is highly suggestive of "skull." Izaak Walton, who evidently had a special love of chub fishing, delights to call the fish a *cheven*, *chevin*, or *chavender*, without for a moment using the terms opprobriously; though there is no escaping the evident fact that the *ch* in them contain the sting of the "big head," coming as they probably do from the French *chef*.

Here, then, the chub must be left etymologically; it is no use kicking against the pricks; and probably the poor *Leuciscus* will go down to posterity as the "chuckle-headed" fish *par excellence*, however much his friends and admirers, who hold him to be a fairly-proportioned creature after his kind, may protest that his nomenclature is an unjust libel. Taking him all in all, the chub is a very presentable fish; and though not as game and hard fighting when hooked as a trout or a barbel, and other fish which could be named, he affords the angler very fair sport.

He is not as commonly distributed a fish in the United Kingdom as some others of the "coarse" species, but many rivers hold him. He is found in the Welsh Wye and Trvon, and many other salmon and trout waters; to the disgust of fishermen intent on higher game; and most of our English rivers are fairly stocked with him, such as the Trent and Thames, and smaller streams, such as the Kennet, the Windrush, and the Loddon. The Lea also, as in Walton's days, holds chub; but, altogether, the Thames may be said to be our best chub water, particularly for winter fishing.

A few years ago there was a general outcry that chub were falling off in the Thames, and the cause assigned was the increase in the number of pleasure boats on the river, and particularly of steam launches, which for other reasons are the anglers' special abomination. Chub love quiet, and hence the reason suggested for their diminution in the Thames seemed plausible; but, as they now seem to be on the increase again, we must suppose the race has gradually got accustomed to the perturbed state of the river in modern times, as the race of oxen, sheep, and horses have to railway trains passing through their grazing grounds. The size, however, of Thames chub has certainly decreased of late years. There are not now nearly so many large chub—say of 5 lbs. and 6 lbs. or more—in the Thames as there were some twenty or thirty years ago; and therefore the 5 lbs. 6 oz. fish recently taken at Weybridge, as above mentioned, must be considered as a veritable monster in these degenerate days.

To the credit of our chub, let it be distinctly stated that he is the most accommodating of all our fresh-water fish. As already intimated, he is both a summer and a winter fish, and, indeed, can be taken, if you wish to take him, in any month in the year; and as to his appetite, he is the least fastidious of the scaly tribes. Nothing comes amiss to him. He will take living fish, and dead fish on a flight of hooks; he runs at the artificial spinning-bait, he devours flies of all kinds, cock-chafers, beetles, and, in fact, negotiates the whole gastronomic range of the entomological world. Worms of all kinds he will devour by the quart, and he is by no means

averse to the lively frog, immortalized by old Izaak in his loving directions for impaling it on the hook. Moreover, his capacious maw greedily receives gentles, pastes, greaves, fat bacon, cheese, bullock's pith, and a variety of other substances too numerous to mention. In fact, a more omnivorous denizen of our waters there does not exist. Hence it comes to pass that he is taken by the Thames anglers, when spinning for trout in the spring, before the season is open for coarse fish; and when, under these circumstances, he attaches himself to the fatal triangles, he is by no means welcome; for, in the first place, he is out of season, and has to be returned to the water; and in the second, he causes the fisherman a most painful disappointment, by inspiring the hope that a veritable Thames trout has been hooked.

If there be a time and justification for applying the opprobrious term "loggerhead" to the chub, it is when he officiously and offensively puts himself in the place of the much-desired *Salmo fario*. In June, July, and August the chub is taken with the artificial fly—any pattern almost will do, if it be large enough—and artificial insects of all kinds, and with the natural fly and natural insect by "dapping" or "daping" over the boughs and bushes. He is taken, too, all through the summer on the "leger" and other tackle, when the fisherman is intent on barbel and roach, and the worms specially intended for the perch also attract him. He will not even allow the jackfisher to pursue his special quarry in peace, as was shown the other day by a fine *Leuciscus cephalus* seizing a live bait intended solely for *Esox lucius*.

The fisherman does not always want chub, but when he does, let him lay himself out specially for them. Now is his time—at least, when the waters subside a little, and if the frost does not continue; for, unlike some other fish, the chub will not bite when the thermometer is below freezing point. The modern *modus operandi* in the winter is with "Nottingham tackle," so that a long stretch of water can be commanded; for be it noted that, though the chub be a most omnivorous fish, he is a shy and wary one, and therefore the farther the fisherman is from him the better. The angler should choose a run of water some thirty or forty yards long, the bottom fairly level, the stream not too quick nor too slow, from three to five feet deep, and close to a line of willows, or bushes and boughs of some kind or other.

Seated or standing in a punt fixed at the head of the swim, he commences operations with the bait he hears happens to be most in favour with the fish at the particular time; for, like other fish, chub on some days fancy one bait, and on other days another, according to some inscrutable law of their being, and perhaps the state of the water. Cheese is an excellent winter bait, and a lump of Gruyère or Cheddar, about the size of ordinary dice, or larger, will hold on a hook much longer than most persons would imagine. As the baited hook is being carried down stream, or rather before you start it, pieces of cheese, chewed small, must be forwarded as ground bait, to attract the fish from their hover under the boughs and whet their appetites. But the best winter bait of all is "pith"—i.e., the spinal marrow of a bullock,

with bullock's brains for ground bait. The use of these is comparatively a modern discovery; and they are a fatal temptation to the poor chevin. The large takes of recent years are almost wholly due to this bait. Both the pith and brains, however, have to be carefully prepared by thoroughly washing and cleansing in cold water, and afterwards by boiling for about fifteen minutes. An ordinary day's fishing consumes the pith and brains of about one bullock.

"Nottingham" fishing for chub is a most artistic method, and by no means an easy one, especially if the day be wet or windy, when there is a great difficulty in getting the fine, light line to pay out regularly. To fish well in this style requires long practice; but it is well worth the while of the angler to master it. Thirty or forty, or even more, good chub may be taken in a day on the Thames with the pith and brains bait and Nottingham tackle, and that, too, without having to shift the punt more than four or five times.

Alas! that when you have got a sackful of chub they are worth next to nothing—*pace* Mr. Greville F—, gastronomically. Rightly says "Venator" in the "Complete Angler," "the chub is the worst fish that swims;" and rightly the French call him *un vilain*. If they can do nothing with him as adepts in the mageiric art, who can? A chub kept a single night without being "cleaned" is absolutely uneatable. It is not even fit—though the atrocity is suggested by "Piscator," in answer to "Venator"—"to be given away to some poor body."

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Mutiny.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XVI.—"SAVE ME, SAVE ME, SAHIB!"

IT was soon apparent to the general that his residence was by no means safe; and, after a brief consultation, he resolved to make good a retreat to the fort while it was practicable.

Vaughan, Morley, and the Scotch corporal accompanied him, as there seemed nothing else for them to do at present.

They did not believe even yet that those they sought were, indeed, not in Jhod Rao's power, and so for the moment they cast in their lots with the general's till they should have time to consider what was the best course to pursue.

The way from the general's house to the fort was diversified by a little hail of bullets from down turnings, and from the windows of houses they passed; but the shots were returned when practicable, and the fort was reached with only the loss of one man, a native.

It was only too evident that Rao had given the spurt required to make the smouldering mutinous feeling burst out into a flame, which now burned furiously all over Bagra.

All the European inhabitants, men, women, and little children, poured into the fort during the day. Most of the native servants fled, and but a very small proportion of the sepoys remained faithful. These, however, were very welcome, as European

soldiers were too few in number to properly garrison the place.

On the day following, Vaughan sought Morley, who was just returning from an interview with the general. He drew him aside to where they could speak without being overheard.

"Morley," he said, as the other waited for him to begin, "what are we to do now?"

"Heaven knows," said Morley, despondently. "We seem to be caught like rats in a trap, so that we are quite helpless."

"Shall we not slip out as we did before, in the night?"

"Where shall we go?" Morley asked in the same spiritless fashion. "I have thought and thought till I could think no longer; but no amount of thinking gives me an idea what to do. I give up now, and leave it to you. Decide on some plan, and I will agree to it, whatever it is."

"The first thing is, do we believe Rao has had a hand in the disappearance?"

"I do. The scoundrel, I longed to punch his head as he stood smiling so blandly on us. Rob, I believe I shall murder that fellow one of these days, if we find that he knew where those girls were all the time."

"You think he did?" said Vaughan. "So do I. In that case we don't want to leave the town. If we leave the fort in the night, we are certain to be discovered in the morning, should we stay in or near Bagra. It seems to me that we must remain here for a little time. We must send native spies to find out whether they are in the town or not."

"It is maddening," groaned Morley; "here we are compelled to remain inactive, and who knows what they may be suffering."

Vaughan's brow contracted into a frown. He knew too well that Morley's anxiety was chiefly for Mabel, and the fact enraged him, though he was perfectly assured that she was his alone.

He turned away impatiently, forcing back the angry words that rose to his lips. Suddenly he became aware of a noise and confusion outside, in the open space between the building and the outer wall, and his displeasure was forgotten as he and Morley hurried out side by side to see what was the matter.

They could not tell at first, for this part of the compound was full of people. Pressing through the crowd, Vaughan saw the cause of the disturbance. A slightly-made lad, a Mohammedan, as the young officers quickly learnt from the excited tongues around, was standing, securely bound, in the midst of a circle of European soldiers.

"What are they going to do?" asked Vaughan, sharply, of a man in a clerical dress, who stood next him.

"Smear him with pork-fat, and then shoot him," was the reply. "He will mind the defiling much more than being killed. It serves him right, the bloodthirsty heathen."

At that instant the men began to close round their prisoner, who made a desperate but futile attempt to free his hands, at the same time glancing from face to face with a scared look; but the compassionate were few in number, and the revengeful many.

Vaughan dashed forward and stood by the boy, with an angry light in his eyes, and the next minute Morley was by his side, ready to back him up to the best of his power.

"Stand back," said Vaughan's firm, commanding tones; and involuntarily the men fell away, leaving a clear space round the three.

The boy threw himself at Vaughan's feet.

"Save me, save me, sahib!" he gasped. "I will fight on your side—do anything, only save me."

"Get up," said Vaughan, "and keep close to me. Look here, my men, I won't stand by and see a lot of Englishmen disgrace themselves by behaving like savages. By whose orders are you doing this?"

"By the general's," said two or three of the men.

"The general may have given orders for him to be shot," said Vaughan; "but I am sure he would not agree to this other piece of barbarity."

"He was one of those who shot down Lieutenant O'Hara," said a tall, hard-faced man, whom Vaughan recognized directly as one of those who had accompanied him to Rao's house.

"And you are some of the lieutenant's company, I see. But it won't do, my lads. We will avenge him on all the offenders before long, I hope, in fair fight, but not by torturing a wretched boy."

There was some murmuring and grumbling as the two young men cut the cords and set the lad free, when he caught Vaughan's hand and kissed it.

"Stop a bit," said Vaughan, gravely. "I can prevent their interfering with your religious prejudices, but by myself I am powerless to save your life."

"Kill me yourself, sahib," said the lad, "if I must die; but don't give me up to them."

"Come, Morley," said Vaughan, "I am going to speak to the general."

The three passed through the crowd, which parted to make way for them.

"Rob," said Morley, as they took their way in the direction of the rooms the general had decided to occupy, "here is a chance for us. The boy is intensely grateful, I can see. He will be faithful, if we make use of him as a spy."

"I had thought of that; but the general may not see it."

The general, however, was by no means hard-hearted. He declared he had a wretched cold in his head, and could not be bothered about the boy. Vaughan might do what he liked with him.

"You see, Frank," he said to Morley, who stayed after the other two had gone, to get a written order for the safe conduct of the lad through the gates of the fort; "you see, Frank, I feel as though I must have any prisoners that are taken, shot, for example's sake; but it goes against the grain. I can cut down my fair share in the field as well as any man—always take cold, though, doing it—but there is something so cold-blooded about ordering them for execution."

"There is. Thanks," said Morley, looking on impatiently as the general signed his name to the paper, for he was in a hurry to join Vaughan.

He found his friend in the middle of giving complete instructions to the boy, who was listening attentively.

"Does he agree to go, Vaughan?"

"Yes, and promises to be true to us. If you bring us news as to where they are, I will reward you well."

"You have rewarded me already with life," said the boy, in his own language.

"Had we not better wait for night before we let him pass the gates?" said Morley.

Their new ally shook his head.

"I am known as on their side. No one will hurt me."

Morley wrote on a leaf in his pocket-book, and tore it out.

"Here," he said, folding it, "if you should by any chance see either of the ladies, give her this."

A cloud came once more over Vaughan's brow as the lad took the scrap of paper. He felt sure that the lines were to Mabel, and glanced angrily at Morley, who, however, did not see the look.

But could Vaughan have seen, he would have acknowledged that those few words gave him no cause for the jealousy which burned fiercely at times in his heart.

Morley had merely written:

"Help is at hand. V. and M. are in pursuit."

The lad was sent off, and in spite of the anxiety that preyed on their spirits, the young men had to resign themselves as well as they could, to the endurance of suspense, which is very hard to be borne by those who are ready to dare anything, face any danger, to attain their object.

The temporary restoration of their old relations was fading away again, and they avoided each other as much as possible, only now and then exchanging a few cold words, as circumstances forced it on them.

As they were compelled to stay there for the time being, Vaughan agreed to the general's suggestion that he should take the command of O'Hara's company as long as he was able. He was surprised to find that his interference with them in respect to the Mohammedan boy, instead of rendering him unpopular, had rather told in his favour, the men trying in any way possible to show their respect.

Morley made himself useful to the general as aide-de-camp *pro tem.*, and a day or two passed quietly without anything save the red glow that lighted the sky in different parts nightly, and the entry of fugitives at intervals, to tell that they were in the midst of a city of enemies.

The general had sent out messengers at the first, explaining his position, and asking for assistance to quell the disturbance, which, he thought, might be expected at any time.

However, the calm was deceitful, and the mutinous sepoy were not long content to express their hatred by burning the now evacuated houses of Europeans in the town.

On the fourth morning after the retreat to the fort, guns were brought to bear on one part of the outer wall, and, in spite of the fire of several batteries being concentrated on the spot from which round shot were sent, the enemy's firing was kept up long enough to make a breach in the wall.

That was sufficient. A large body of sepoy came on with a rush, and some even succeeded in passing the breach; but the steady fire that greeted them soon checked their advance.

"Forward, my men!" cried Vaughan, whose eyes flashed with the excitement; and he dashed to the front, and led the detachment in advance with so much energy that the mutineers, in spite of their immense superiority in numbers, fell back in confusion.

Their leader made a desperate attempt to rally them, but the sudden dash of Vaughan's men had so taken them by surprise that they were driven back for some distance at the point of the bayonet, and then, losing all semblance of order, they broke up and fled down different streets.

The young officer brought his men back in triumph, having only two wounded; and was congratulated warmly by the general.

A temporary lull ensuing, a number of men were told off to repair the breach as quickly as possible.

There was no doubt that the sepoys had lost a great many of their number; but it would take the loss of a very much larger proportion to effectually discourage them, as they would scarcely miss a number of fallen that, taken from the ranks of the defenders of the fort, would have finally set aside all thought of resistance.

But at present the list of the wounded was not extensive, and the part of the building set aside as hospital had but few occupants, so that the surgeon and assistant-surgeon of the garrison had plenty of leisure for these cases.

One day succeeded another, and the Indian lad did not return. Morley, finding Vaughan distant and reserved, spoke to McAndrew about it, and asked the Scot's opinion.

"It's vairy likely," said the corporal, "that he's now with those fighting against us, sir; and that they are making use of what he saw as to the state of things in here. If I'd been in Captain Vaughan's place, I wadna ha'e been in such a hurry to gie him his freedom."

"Well, it's of no use, McAndrew. I cannot bear this inaction longer. I shall leave the fort this night. You can come with me, or stay here, with Captain Vaughan, which you like."

"Gude presairve us, sir, ye'll do naething of the kind, I'm thinkin'. Why, how would it sairve the puir young leddies for you to go and get yersel' cut in pieces, or shot from a gun, which is one of their deevilish tricks?"

"Which is it to be?" said Morley, in a calm tone.

"Ou, if it comes to that, I must e'en stay here. But you'd better wait another day or two, sir; it wad be a pity if the heathen laddie came back as soon as you were gone. Better wait a day or two, and see."

"Captain Vaughan wants to see you, sir," said a voice; and, without a word, Morley followed the messenger, who showed him into a room tenanted by Vaughan and their boyish ally.

Morley's heart seemed to stand still as he caught sight of the lad. He stood a moment, and then advanced, looking eagerly from the spy to Vaughan. The latter, he could see, was struggling to repress some emotion, of what kind he could not tell.

"Repeat what you told me to Captain Morley," said Vaughan, hoarsely.

"The mem sahibs not with Jhod Rao at all, Sahib Morley. They have been all the time in the zenana of the Rajah of Krohl. They are there now."

CHAPTER XVII.—"BE READY."

"WILL you not send us back to our friends? If you are not our enemy, why do you mean to keep us here?"

Mabel Stafford spoke imploringly, and fixed her dark eyes anxiously on the rajah's face as this was interpreted to him.

The Rajah of Krohl was seated opposite to the two girls, with a few of his courtiers around him. By his side stood his interpreter, for he spoke but little English, so that the conversation between him and his captives proceeded but slowly.

He was a handsome man, of about thirty, with an intelligent face and black eyes that usually wore a dreamy expression, but could flash into fire when he was roused, in a way that made his subjects tremble.

His dress was composed of rich silk of a pale, delicate, salmon colour, glittering with jewels, of which, however, he wore but few at the present time, in comparison to the number that sparkled all over his person on state occasions.

Omitting the pauses for interpretation, the interview proceeded in the following manner:—

"You have nothing to fear. You shall be treated as guests in an English household, and everything done for your comfort. At present, however, I cannot send you on to Chutnegunj."

"May I ask your highness why not?" said Dora, who thought perhaps it would be better to propitiate the rajah by politeness.

"The country is in too disturbed a state. To show myself friendly to the Europeans by such a step would create disaffection amongst my subjects. At heart I am friendly to your race, and so are these gentlemen, but the common people hate and fear you. It is enough. You will remain here until matters are settled."

The firmness that mingled with the rajah's politeness made both girls feel that it was no use appealing to him. They were silent, and looked sadly at each other.

"I had no wish to make you captives," said the prince, after a pause. "You were brought here by a party of sowars, from the hills, who did not know what else to do with you. It was not by my commands."

"We are grateful for your kindness," said Dora. "It seems, then, there is nothing to say but let us go back at the first opportunity. But could you not let our friends know we are here?"

"I am sorry to have to refuse your request," was the reply, accompanied by renewed assurances of goodwill.

The rajah rose to leave them. He looked rather earnestly at Mabel as he passed out, but she did not see the glance, as her eyes were full of the tears kept back before.

"That is encouraging," said Dora, when they were alone, her voice trembling in spite of the effort she made to keep it steady. She looked at her friend and tried to laugh, but the laugh changed

into a sob, and she broke down and indulged in a hearty cry.

"That's better," she said, drying her eyes after a few minutes. "Oh, Mabel, for pity's sake don't sit there looking so dejected, and dropping one tear at a time. Do have a good cry and get it over, there's a darling."

Mabel shook her head sadly, as she wiped away the hot drops that seemed to spring from a deeper pain than Dora's.

"It is over already," she said, quietly. "I am not going to give way again."

"After all, dear, things might be much worse. So far we are treated with great respect, and the rajah promises it shall continue. And we are sure to be sought for. Let us make the best of things."

They fought hard to cast aside the feeling of dread that oppressed them, and to trust in the rajah's assurances, and in a measure succeeded.

The door was no longer fastened on the outside; but they made no attempt to pass it, as it was plain enough that escape was impossible. It opened into a long passage, at the end of which a guard was always stationed. Then, the walls surrounding the palace were high, and they knew that even if they were to reach the courtyard, they could go no farther.

"We must wait and hope," Mabel said; and the rajah, at his next visit, found his pale prisoners apparently resigned to what seemed inevitable.

For amusement, they had the lattice window, through which they watched the richly-dressed figures passing to and fro in the divan. Sometimes the rajah would be there receiving visitors, and on such occasions the girls looked eagerly for a white face, but always in vain.

In addition, they had books; for two or three days after they were brought to the palace, a pile of volumes was brought by an attendant, which, on examination, proved to be a miscellaneous collection of English literature, much to the astonishment of Dora. Mabel, however, had had more experience of India, and knew that some of the native potentates were fond of imitating their European conquerors.

After the first, they saw other servants besides those who had at first waited on them; and one young and by no means bad-looking girl was presented to them by the rajah, and evidently considered herself their slave.

She could speak a little English, and the girls were often beguiled into a smile by her blunders in trying to express herself so that they should comprehend her.

The rajah's name, she told them, was Ismail; but any questions about him, or as to what was going on in the outer world, invariably rendered her very stupid, so that it was impossible to make her understand what was said.

"Dora," said Mabel, one day, after she had been looking down into the divan for a longer period than usual, "have you noticed that one of those Indian ladies, who are generally in the room opposite this, is nearly always at the window, looking across here?"

"No," said Dora, looking over her shoulder. "They are all alike. How can you tell that it is always the same one? You see nothing but her eyes."

"Ah, but her eyes are different to those of all the rest. They are so large, and have such long, dark lashes. She must be beautiful."

"Is that she?"

"Yes."

"How she watches us! Come away, Mabel. Her eyes make me shiver. They gleam so wickedly at us."

They moved to where they were invisible from the opposite window, and tried to forget the lady.

The next day Ismail paid them another visit, accompanied, as before, by some of his court.

As he was about to take his departure, Mabel summoned up courage and asked him if there was no prospect of their release yet.

"Wait a little longer," he said; and, as Mabel looked at him, she saw that his glance was no longer one of assumed respect, but of admiration.

She turned her head quickly away, and the action showed her that the figure was at the opposite lattice, intently gazing across.

The rajah went; and Mabel stood trembling from head to foot.

The fears which had been lulled by the monotony of the last few days were all suddenly roused into life, and for a minute or two she felt about to faint. Dora, who had been rather pre-occupied, was roused by a touch on her arm from the maid, and immediately started to her friend's side.

"Mabel! what is the matter? What has happened? Are you ill?"

"No, no," and Mabel dropped into a chair, to cover her face with her hands. "I am not ill—only frightened. Oh, why does not help come? Oh, Dora, if they have given us up as dead!"

Dora kissed and cheered her, but she could not elicit any reply to her repeated questions as to the cause of this sudden emotion.

The maid stood looking on with wondering eyes, and seemed to be endeavouring to follow what was said.

An hour or two later, the girls were looking down at the divan, where the rajah, blazing with jewels, was welcoming some friends.

Suddenly the figure which had not been there at first reappeared at the opposite lattice. The Indian girl, who was behind Dora, touched her lightly, and showed her betel-stained teeth in a broad smile, as she made a motion with her hand towards the watcher.

"Ranee Mulla jealous," she said, looking at Dora with an amused expression.

"Jealous! Of whom?" exclaimed Dora, for the thought had never struck her as an explanation of the untiring curiosity evinced.

"Of her," said the girl, indicating Mabel; and Dora laughed, and then turned pale.

Mabel had heard, but she showed no surprise.

"Hush, dear," she said, while a faint flush came into her cheek. "Don't encourage her to talk like that. It is only her fancy, perhaps. Let us keep away from the window."

Towards evening, when they sat, hand clasped in hand, looking out at the gathering shades, and silently wondering how it fared with those to whom they had looked for aid, and whether they, too, were

in danger, the dark-eyed maid stole away, and left them to themselves.

Inside the palace there was the hum of life and motion, though in a subdued key; outside, the tramp of feet, and occasional buzz of voices.

Two or three stars, the only familiar objects in all that surrounded them, twinkled, faintly at first, and then more brightly as the sky deepened in tint.

Few people can look at the stars for any length of time in silence, without feeling that overpowering sense of their own littleness, and of the vastness of space into which they gaze, which steals on every one now and then.

Both Mabel and Dora forgot their troubles for a time in that dreamy half-light, and it was with a sensation of unwillingness that they were recalled to the present by the return of the native girl, who approached them hurriedly.

"Here, take it," she said, quickly, slipping a piece of paper into Mabel's hand, while she glanced nervously into the dark corners of the room, as though expecting to see that she was watched.

"What is it?" asked both together, as they gazed at the crumpled scrap, in the dimness not being able to make out whether it bore writing.

The girl laid her finger on her lips, and looked behind her.

"Bring us a light," said Dora, in a low, agitated tone. "Quick, oh, pray be quick!"

While she was gone, they held the piece of paper as close to the window as possible, but could distinguish nothing. Dora stamped with impatience as they waited for what seemed an age, though in reality it was but a few minutes.

At last the light came, and by holding the paper very near it, they could read, faintly traced with a pencil, the words:

"Help is at hand. Be ready."

Mabel gave a half-stifled sob, and covered her face with her hands; while Dora, who was by far the most practical of the two, held the paper in the flame till it was reduced to ashes. Then a sudden thought struck her.

"Whose writing was it?" she said, eagerly.

"Not Robert's. Perhaps it was Captain Morley's," said Mabel.

"Oh, no, it was not his, I am sure. Whose could it have been?"

The question was put aside as unanswerable; and for the rest of the evening they were continually straining their ears, and starting at every sound.

Their little maid left them as usual when they no longer required her services, having been utterly unable to comprehend their inquiries as to where she had obtained the message.

Dora put out the light at the same time as on the previous night, and lay down beside Mabel, completely dressed as she was, both determining to lie awake and listen.

However, an hour or two passed, and all was silent. The chair, placed in front of the door, did not move; and, in spite of their uncertainty, the girls grew sleepy.

Mabel was in a sound slumber, and Dora's eyes were closing, when the scraping, muffled sound of the feet of the chair over the carpet sent a sudden

thrill through her, making her wide-awake in an instant.

She lay without motion, her eyes turned towards the door. The next minute, faintly visible in the darkness, a white figure came slowly towards the bed.

Dora felt as though suffering from nightmare. Her heart beat violently; and though she tried to speak, no sound came, even when the figure bent over the charpoy, and a hand was passed lightly across her.

Suddenly the midnight visitor stood erect, and paused a moment silently; then, with a quick movement, raised a hand; and, as a pale ray of moonlight fell across the room, it gleamed on the blade of a weapon.

Guffey's Aquatic Propulsioners.

IT all resulted from Guffey being so enthusiastic about inventions. He is always making some tremendous discovery or other that won't work, and using up nine-tenths of his income in cog-wheels, machinery, chemicals, and things. In fact, Mr. Guffey's mother-in-law often remarks, in a sarcastic manner, that Guffey had better put in his time inventing some sort of improvement or other on the ordinary almshouse, as he'd send the family to one before he got through. The fact that Guffey has been blown up four times, had two fingers cut off by a new Reversible Reaper that never reaped anything afterwards, doesn't appear to discourage that inventor in the least. He says he is bound to illustrate the march of the human intellect and benefit mankind, if he has to part with both arms even in doing so.

Well, last Sunday Guffey went down to see the North Beach swimming matches, and he was pained to observe that it took the winner over half an hour to swim three-quarters of a mile. This was all wrong, Guffey said to himself. Some means must be discovered by which ordinary adult voters could swim at least as fast as a steamboat proceeds. For instance, if the best swimmer in the present old foggy style should fall overboard, or have his vessel sunk in the middle of the Pacific, it would be more than six months before he could swim back into San Francisco harbour, even if he wasn't quarantined while passing Fort Point. Guffey accordingly pitched in, and yesterday he produced a sort of umbrella-shaped arrangement, a couple of which he designed having strapped underneath the swimmer's feet. As the latter kick in the usual way, of course the apparatus would open and propel the wearer in the manner of a duck's foot, while it would fold up, in a like manner, when drawn in the reverse direction.

Guffey was very proud of his patent aquatic propulsioners, and he invited the family and a few dozen acquaintances to go over to the beach and see how she worked. When they got there, he experienced a slight twinge of his old rheumatism, and as he was afraid of its return, should he go into the water, he conferred the honour of making the first trip in the A. P.'s upon his brother-in-law, Diffenderfer. Guffey remarked that may be it was best that way, anyhow, as Diffenderfer couldn't swim, and the experiment would show that a person could

skim the water like a thing of life, whether he knew anything about the art of natation or not. D. said he'd just as leave hire out the trial trip to a small boy; but still, rather than go back on the march of science, he'd do the best he could.

Unfortunately, however, instead of crawling out into deep water on his hands and knees, as directed by Guffey, Diffenderfer took three or four steps on the bottom as he got under way, and the result was that the ribs of the invention got curled up, so to speak, and turned up around D.'s ankles like a wash-bowl, as it were. Of course, any intelligent mind can grasp what happened then. Instead of propelling him through the water with shark-like velocity, every kick Mr. Diffenderfer gave worked just the other way, pulling him down like a sheet-anchor. In a few seconds he found himself pounding away on the bottom like a car horse, with forty feet of water above his head.

"I wonder what is the matter with Augustus?" said Mrs. Diffenderfer, who was beginning to get anxious.

"Dunno—'tis kinder funny," replied Guffey. "May be he's kinder dived off somewhere. Wonderful invention, those propellers. He'll come up, after while, over by Goat Island, likely."

But after a considerable time had elapsed, Guffey concluded that he might just as well ask a fisherman, who was looking on, to prod around a little with his boat-hook, and it was not long before he got hold of Diffenderfer by the slack of his tights, and hauled him out on the sand. After they had rolled the martyr to misplaced confidence and science on a barrel for a couple of hours, and Mrs. D. had knocked the inventor down twice with her parasol, Diffenderfer came to, and was sent home in a push-cart. The next day he expressed his unalterable conviction that Guffey had put up a job to assassinate him, as he had named him as executor in his will; and he further sent word to that miserable scientist that he would call around the very first day he got out, and that he intended to bring his gun with him.

Ostrich Farming.

WE had the pleasure a few days ago of seeing

Mr. Charlwood's ostriches at Kruidfontein, and of seeing his system of ostrich farming. There was even more pleasure to experience than this. Here was a piece of ground which certainly could not maintain three hundred sheep or goats, year in and year out, maintaining twenty pairs of fine ostriches, worth at least £3,000, and promising to yield 100 per cent. this year on their value. Let people who like grumble about the ostrich taking the place of corn, and oats, and of the Merino sheep. Here is a patch of veld, which cannot be used for agriculture—which would not yield a head of cabbage without very much more cost and trouble than it would be worth—yielding twice the income of the finest agricultural farm, and with only an infinitesimal fraction to be deducted for labour.

Since there are large tracts as well suited for the ostrich as Mr. Charlwood's piece of his farm, we have, or may have, as a result, vast tracts of country

now yielding a scanty living to a few sheep and goats giving a return in hard cash equal to the same area of the best agricultural ground abundantly supplied with water. Surely this new industry is a great gain to the country.

Zwart River, the bed of a torrent which in rains carries off in a few hours the water from the mountains to the east, cuts the farm in about the middle. Its banks are well clothed with mimosas, which Mr. Charlwood, though there is a public outspan at the homestead, has preserved with admirable care. The ground on each side of the river-bed is partitioned off into camps, each about three hundred by two hundred yards square, the whole enclosed with the ordinary wire fencing. On each side of each partitioning fence Mr. Charlwood is getting broad and deep furrows cut. He says this checks the birds when running—as they sometimes do when frightened—keeps them from running against the fences and hurting themselves, and teaches each pair, by well-defined limits, to respect the domains of their neighbours.

There is not water enough on the ground for a tortoise. The birds have, therefore, to be supplied with drinking water. This is done by placing in each camp the half of a barrel, cut through the middle for economy, and filled every day with fresh water, two men with a Scotch cart being constantly employed in the work. Though the veld is of the approved sort for ostriches, and is at present in very fine condition, Mr. Charlwood being this year in luck's way as to rain, the birds get their daily supply of prickly pear, a man to chop it up, and a man and cart to take it from camp to camp being constantly on duty. If the article of food is well attended to, no less is that which alone makes food healthy—digestion. Into every camp has been brought an abundant supply of lime and broken bones. The broad-spreading mimosas along the river afford shade to the birds in heat, and protection from cold and storms.

All this care, with the natural advantages of the place, must, the reader will say, produce some satisfactory result. The result is there now, in the form of over twenty pairs of splendid birds with magnificent plumage. It was there last year, when his clip of feathers realized over £800 on the market here. It is there in another camp on another part of the farm, in a miscellaneous collection of young birds, and of birds on which the idea of parentage has not yet dawned.

By the way, Mr. Charlwood says he has discovered that a well-fed, well-conditioned bird acquires the idea sooner than a poor and half-starved one. But for this we do not give him very much credit. Any one with a grain of sense could have made the same discovery, which, seeing a lot of people want their ostriches to fructify on stones for food, is a contention that a lot of people have not that single grain. With the greatest respect for the maxim about the cobbler and his last, we never felt so strong a desire to give up "running a newspaper," with its dreadful drudgery, as we did on seeing Mr. Charlwood's eminent success, without the drudgery.

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"IT'S A NIBBLE, BOB."



Dutch the Diver:
The Tale of some Sunken Ships.
 BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER LII.—SAM OAKUM'S NARRATIVE.



MORNING came bright as ever, and I gave a bit of a laugh as I saw Mr. Meldon and Miss Bessy tight hold of hands; for, in place of seeming to fear him, she was now looking up to him as if for protection. My mates, poor chaps, were in a queer state, for they were

much burnt; and now they lay on the raft with their poor heads seeming to ask Mr. Meldon to come and help them; and, with Mrs. Dutch to assist him, he did all he could for them.

Just about a quarter of a mile from us lay the ship, smoking and burning just a little, her poop and mid-ships a deal shattered, main and mizen gone, and lying alongside, but fore-mast standing, with nearly all the rigging. As to the fore-part, it did not seem much damaged; and, as she hadn't sunk so far, the skipper said as she wouldn't sink at all while it kept calm; so, Mr. Dutch being of his opinion, we paddled our raft and boat back once more. We got aboard; and what with one of the pumps left rigged, and a bucket or two, we found we got out pretty well every spark and bit of flame we could find; made our examination amongst the black, steaming ruin, and found that the second explosion must have taken an upward direction, and blown a good half of the deck off. Still, so far as we could see, there was no fear of her sinking; so, clearing a spot forward, we began to think of getting the others aboard.

But, first of all, we got a bit of sailcloth, and laid it over the poor gentleman as lay there stiff and stark, so as not to distress his sister.

Now the fat stooard had offered to help us, and no doubt would have done his best; but hang me if he could any more mount the side than fly. He panted and puffed for a bit, but that was all, and then he sat down again on the raft, puffing and talking to Mrs. Dutch when he could get her to speak,

which wasn't often. As for my mates, poor chaps, they couldn't hold a head up; and I was very glad when we'd got a bit of an awning rigged up, and the ladies aboard and underneath it.

Next thing to be done was to find some biscuit and water, Mr. Dutch said, for they'd finished what was in the breaker, the two poor chaps being that thirsty they kept asking for it, and Mrs. Dutch not having the heart to refuse. So Mr. Dutch said water; but, speaking for myself, I said rum. After a long hunt, we found, just where we should never have thought to see it, a tin of preserved meat, and had a hard job to open it, but we managed that; and then I was in luck soon after, and turned up a bag of biscuits, half burned and smoked, half sound; while a little hard work laid bare a water cask, and I filled the breaker.

It was quite warm, that water was, but in our state every drop was so much bottled joy, and after a good hearty draught, I was ready for any amount more work.

So, after forgetting them for some time, I go up the fore-mast, and had a good look out for the other boat and Lauré; but not a sight of them could I see, after a good half-hour's watch; when I came down, and helped to get all the burnt wood over-board.

Now, done up as we were, it wasn't reasonable to expect a vast deal of work done; but we kept steadily on till it was dark, when we finished the tin of meat, had a biscuit and some water apiece, settled that I was to keep the first watch, and then, without a mutineer within reach, the others lay down to rest, for they had settled that Mr. Studwick should be buried at daybreak.

Well, I took my place, and helped myself to a quid, leaned over the bulwark, and watched the clear, bright stars, now in the sky, now as I saw them shining in the water, and then I got asking myself questions about how it was all to end, when I thought I should be more comfortable sitting down. So, picking out a spot, I began to reckon up how long it would be before I must call Mr. Dutch to relieve me; and then I thought that he'd feel as bad as I did, and want Mr. Wilson to relieve him; and then he'd watch till daybreak, when he'd relieve the birds; and Mr. Meldon would put a piece of fresh bandage round the turtle dove's head; and if the fire broke out again the fat stooard would cry upon it till Pollo boxed his ears, when he'd relieve me, and I should—no, I shouldn't—yes, I should—

I started, saying to myself "I was nearly asleep," when I took a fresh turn at my quid, and Mr. Parkley asked me if I'd marry him and Miss Bessy, and the black could give them away, and then go and sit on the raft with me, and sink it down, and down, and down, and always going down, and lower and

lower; and instead of its getting darker and darker, it got lighter and lighter, and there seemed a warm glow as from the sun, only it was the water so far down seemed to choke; and I told Mr. Parkley I didn't think it quite proper, but I'd marry them if the fat stooard would not give them away, but get out of the way—and—avast, then—avast, then—yes, what?—all right—

"The fire has burst out again!" cried Dutch.

And that just while I closed my eyes for half a minute.

CHAPTER LIII.

YOU see, there's that in a fire that it never knows when it is beaten: you drive it down in one place, and it comes up in another, just where you least expect it; while, after such a shock as we had had, there was nothing surprising in our feeling as most people do when there's a fire in a ship with a mixed cargo—afraid of an explosion. There were the flames towering up again quite fiercely and always in the most savage way, just out of our reach.

But if the flames could be savage, I felt that I could too; for, you see, I looked upon it as my fault, for sleeping at my post, when I ought to have seen the first flash out. So I got down amongst the smoke and steam, and as they handed me buckets of water, I placed them well, and by degrees we got the fire under again. It was just about daybreak as we turned all the glow and flame into blackness, half hidden by steam; but even then we daren't leave off, for another such outbreak would make an end of us. Even now most of the cargo seemed destroyed; and it was cruel work, for everything fought against us except the weather, which certainly did keep clear and calm, or we must have gone to the bottom. But, as I said, it did seem such cruel work to have things, that we were ready to die for the want of, destroyed before our eyes.

We were all worn out; but sooner than run any more risks, we kept on pouring water here and there, till it seemed quite impossible for fire to break out again. And there we were at last with the ship our own, what there was of it; but though there was a good-sized piece of the fore-deck left, and a little round the wheel, the only way to get from stem to stern was by climbing down amongst the burned rubbish, and then making your way through it till you reached the poop.

By means of a little hunting about, though, we managed to get at some provisions, and among other things a cask of pork, with the top part regularly cooked. We got at water, too, and some rum; and then it didn't seem to matter, danger or no danger, fire breaking out or Lauré coming back, sleep would have its way; and one after the other we dropped off, the skipper in a corner and Mr. Wilson with his legs dangling down over the burned hold.

I talked to Miss Bessy and Mrs. Dutch afterwards about my having neglected my duty, but they would hardly hear a word about it; and now I found that though we had all slept, Mrs. Dutch had been awake and watching; but now she went into the sort of tent we had rigged her up; and Mr. Dutch having

the same thing in his head as I had, we went and had a talk together; and an hour afterwards we had poor Mr. John Studwick neatly wrapped in a piece of sail-cloth, with some iron stanchions and bolts at the feet, and lying decently waiting for Miss Studwick and the skipper to wake again.

She came out of her tent at sundown, looking pale and haggard; and as soon as she saw what we had been about, the tears began to roll down her cheeks, and she came and knelt down by her brother's head and joined her hands.

I did not want the sign Mr. Dutch made me to do as the others did; and there we knelt for some time on that calm, solemn sort of evening, with the ship just gently rolling on what seemed a sea of orange. There wasn't a breath of wind stirring, but all was quiet and peaceful, with only the ladies' sobs and the twittering of birds to break the stillness.

I don't think I said so before, but there were a many of the birds escaped the fire, and perched about on the deck and the rigging of the foremast; and when we had gently lifted the body of the poor gentleman on to a hatch by the side, we drew back, and knelt down again, thinking his father might like to say a prayer aloud before we gave the body a sailor's funeral, when one of Mr. Wilson's robin-redbreasts hopped down upon the deck, and then giving a flit, perched right upon the dead man's breast, and burst out into its little sad, mournful song, making even my poor old battered heart swell and swell, till I was 'most as bad as the fat stooard, whose complaint I must have caught. I can't tell you how much there seemed in that little bird's sad song; but it was as if it took you back into the far past, and then again into the future; and weak as the little thing was, it had a strange power over all of us there present.

As if that robin had started them, the sparrows began to twitter just as though at home in the eaves; a thrush, far up on the foreto'-gallant yard, piped out a few notes; and a lark flew up and out over the glorious sea, and fluttered and rose a little way, singing as it went, just as if it were joining with the others in a sort of evening hymn. And now it was that Mr. Meldon made a sign to me, just as he'd told me he would; and I got up and went softly to raise the head of the hatch, to let the burden it had on it slowly slip into the golden water. But, with a faint cry, Miss Bessy started forward, seeing what I meant, and half throwing herself upon the long uncouth canvas-wrapping, she sobbed and cried fit to break her heart.

It was a sad sight, and there was not a man there who did not feel for the poor girl. I felt it so much myself that I was glad to turn away; and there we all waited till the sun dipped down below the waves, lower and lower, till he was gone, and a deep, rich purple darkness began to steal over the sea. From golden orange the sky, too, turned from red to a deep blue, with almost every colour of the rainbow staying where the sun had gone down. Then it grew darker and darker, with star after star peeping down at us, and the smooth sea here and there rippled by a soft breeze that came sighing by.

And now it was that Miss Bessy's sobs seemed to have stopped, and, leaning over her, I saw that she

had gently slipped away, so that only her poor white arm lay across the body; and when her father gently lifted it, her head sank lower and lower, and we knew that her grief had been too strong for her, and she had swooned away.

I've been at more than one sailor's funeral, which has a certain sadness about it that seems greater than what you know ashore; but this seemed to me the worst I had ever had to do with. Trouble seemed to have been heaped upon trouble; and though in the heat or excitement of a storm or a fight you often go very near death, yet you don't seem to fear it as you do at a time like this was, when, as I stood over that bit of canvas, it seemed to me that I was nearer to my end than I had ever felt in all the dangers I had been through before.

It was growing darker and darker; the birds had all stopped their twittering, and I was thinking and thinking, when in a slow, sad way Mr. Wilson got up, and came and stood over the corpse, and tried to speak, but his voice seemed choked. He went on after a minute or two, though, and said, in a quiet, deep voice, a short and earnest prayer, one that I had never seen in a book, nor heard before or since; and in it he prayed the great God of all people, who had seen the sufferings of this our poor brother, to take him to Himself, even as we committed his poor decaying body to the great deep—the Almighty's great ocean, upon which we poor helpless ones now floated—thanking Him for His preservation of us so far, and praying that His protection might be with us evermore. And he prayed, too, that as it had pleased God to bereave the sorrowing sister, might it please him to put it into the heart of every man present to be a new brother and protector to the weeping one—even, were it necessary, unto death.

And then there was a great silence fell upon us all; then came a slow, grating sound, a soft rustle as I raised the hatch, and a heavy splash in the water, which broke up into little waves and flashes of light, to die away again into darkness.

There was more than one deep sob heard there that night from out of the darkness; and though dark, it was not so black that we could see Miss Bessy at Mr. Wilson's feet, holding his hand as he bent over her, and she seeming to be kissing and crying over it.

No one seemed to care to move for a long, long time; but at last the ladies' dresses rustled softly as they glided away to the tent; and then Mr. Wilson went and leaned over the side. And though we had all been ready to laugh at him for his looks and ways, there was not a man there but would have gone and gladly shaken the hand which Miss Bessy had kissed; and I felt vexed myself for not feeling before how good a heart the man must have who had so great a love for all of God's creatures, that he would risk his life even for his birds.

That was a sad, sad night, though the ship seemed lighter now that there was no longer death on board; and I was in such a low, miserable state, that I did what seemed to me to be the only thing I could do that night—I went and sat down beside the fat stoard, and looked at Pollo sleeping as if there was nought the matter.

CHAPTER LIV.

WE had no time for sadness and sorrow; there was too much to be done. With the help of the others, I set to, and we made a good strong raft, so as not to trust to the boat alone, and provisioned it, in case of a change of weather; for, though keeping us up well now, I felt sure that a fresh wind must send the ship, silver and all, to the bottom. All I thought would be of use to us I got on the raft; and we spent a many days lashing on a cask here and a spar there, and even rigged up a little mast with a lug-sail, and had an oar or two for steering. I couldn't get myself away from that raft, feeling to want to make it perfect, which it wasn't at all. But there it was, and the best I could make; and day after day we rolled about in the long gentle swell of the great ocean, looking for something to heave in sight.

There was very little to occupy us beyond looking out, for sailing the ship was out of the question, since, if she had careened over, the water would have come pouring in at one of the rents in her side; so we waited on day after day, during which time it seemed to me that a sort of jealous feeling was springing up between Mr. Meldon and Mr. Wilson, for Miss Bessy used to keep away all she could from the young doctor, and sit and talk hour after hour with Mr. Wilson about his birds. But Mr. Wilson, though he used to look pleased, only looked so in a quiet, sad sort of way, and I used to think that he felt it did not mean anything for him; and he'd go and feed his birds afterwards, and sigh as he did it, and always try to be good friends, as far as he could, with Mr. Meldon.

It was a fine thing for us that we had a doctor on board, for I believe he saved both mates' lives, poor chaps, for they had been sadly mauled about by the explosion, and for days and days all they could do was to lie still and talk wildly about things. Rolls in particular would rouse us all of a night, by shouting out that Lauré was striking him. But they both got better by degrees.

Last of all, what I was afraid of happened—the wind changed, and it came on to blow a little. It was nothing more than a pleasant fresh breeze, but enough to make the sea dance a bit, and the old vessel to roll and pitch, so that we were obliged to have a man at the wheel, and a bit of sail set, to keep her out of the trough; but handle her how the skipper would, he couldn't keep the water out, and the question got to be, how long could we wait without taking to the raft? And another question was, too, how long could we keep to the raft without being washed off? Thinking of this made us rig lines round it, and give an extra lashing here and there just where we could.

CHAPTER LV.

"GENTLEMEN," said Captain Studwick, "it strikes me that we have but little time to spare. Mr. Parkley, your silver is going back to its home at the bottom of the sea."

"Yes," said that gentleman, "and where it will lie, for there seems to be a curse with it all along."

The boat already launched was as rapidly as pos-

sible supplied with water, cold provisions, compass, and sail; and, as soon as these were in, Dutch suggested, and his proposal was agreed to, that his wife and the captain's daughter should be lowered down in case of any sudden disposition shown by the ship to sink. The captain gave his orders sharply, and Dutch took his wife in his arms, made fast a rope round her, and lowered her into the larger boat, Bessy submitting herself, as Mr. Mel-don helped, to be lowered to her side.

Mr. Wilson and the doctor followed, Oakum and one of the sailors being the next, so as to take the management of the boat, with orders to push off and lie at about a hundred yards' distance.

Hester half rose, with outstretched hands; but a word from Dutch reassured her as he set to with the captain and the rest on board to lower down such necessities as the cabin contained to freight the second boat.

This work had been going on for about half an hour; the boat had been loaded as far as was safe, and coops, spars, rope, casks, and hatches were being thrown over, with axes and a saw lashed to them, so as to construct a kind of raft from the boats, whose object was to bear the heavier portion of their freight, and also to act as a kind of breakwater in case the sea should roughen, when the boats could lie to leeward and wait until some vessel hove in sight to rescue them from their perilous position.

The fire still blazed furiously, melting down the silver, old Rasp said, and this latter worthy had given a great deal of trouble, from the fact that he considered that the only thing worth saving was the diving apparatus, and he had strewed the deck with various articles which he had brought up, only to be peremptorily rejected. And now all left on board found that their minutes there were numbered, but still they toiled on till a warning cry from Oakum in the further boat drew their attention to a strange hissing noise where the fire burned most fiercely.

"She's sinking," cried Dutch, as the schooner gave a heavy roll.

"Yes, quick! over with you all," cried the captain. Then, with a groan, "Poor old schooner! she deserved a better fate."

One by one they slid down the rope left ready into the boat, till all were in save the captain and Dutch, neither of whom would go first.

"Quick, quick!" cried Mr. Parkley, "or we shall be sucked down."

"Push off!" roared the captain, who saw their peril; and, as they hesitated, he seized the rope and swung himself down, Dutch leaping headlong into the water at the same moment.

It was a close shave; for, as Dutch rose and caught at the boat's gunwale, the oars were dipped and plied manfully, while the schooner blazed now with increased fury, as if the flames meant to secure all they could before the waters seized their prey. The vessel had begun to roll heavily, and the flames, which had now caught the mizen and fore masts, were running rapidly up the rigging, starting in tongues of fire from the tarry ropes, and curling up the masts till they were perfect pyramids of fire.

Three more heavy rolls succeeded, with the hissing of the fire increasing to a shriek, when a cloud

of steam began to arise, and the schooner careened over, so that those in the last boat, as they toiled to get sufficiently far away, could see right down into the burning hold. This lasted but for a few moments, though; and then the burning masts, with their fluttering sheets of flame, rose up perpendicularly, and, with a dive forward, the vessel plunged down, there was a rushing sound, a tremendous explosion, as the steam and confined air blew up the stern deck; and then the hull disappeared, followed slowly by the burning masts, while the small boat, with all the spars and raft material, were drawn towards the vortex.

"Pull," shouted Captain Studwick, and the oars bent as every possible effort was made; but slowly and surely the boat was drawn back towards where coops and hatches, casks and planks, eddied round for a few minutes, and then disappeared.

Dutch had been dragged on board, and, like the captain, he helped at an oar, wondering the while at the power with which they were sucked towards the whirlpool, round which they at last began to sail.

No earthly power could have saved them had they not been able to delay their backward progress for a few minutes; as it was, when they neared the vortex, and over which a barrel was drawn, the bows of the boat were about to plunge down, but by a tremendous effort Dutch dragged the little vessel round, and a succession of fierce tugs sent her once more away from the centre, and another minute's struggle saved them, for the waters were less troubled now, and the danger past.

As they lay off, though, they saw very few of the objects selected for the raft return to the surface; and at last, heart-sick, but thankful for their escape, they gave up the idea of the raft as hopeless, and now steadily rowed to meet their consort.

CHAPTER LVI.—A DREARY TIME.

THE occupants of the two boats, as they lay together that evening beneath the spangled canopy of heaven, little thought that the third of the schooner's boats lay within a few miles of them, with Lauré on board, or they would not have slept in turn so peacefully and in such calm hope of being saved; for, as the schooner sank with its treasure, it seemed to all on board that with the silver sank the kind of curse that had been upon them all through.

It was an empty sense of superstition, but it influenced them and cheered them on through the long, sunny, scorching days, as they bent to their oars and toiled on; and in the evenings, when, taking advantage of the soft breezes, the little sails were spread, and they crept on ever north and east in the hope of gaining the course of one of the vessels going south or west. But the days stole slowly by, and no sail gladdened their sight, and at last, as the water grew low in the little breakers and the provisions threatened to become exhausted, Dutch felt his heart sink, and told himself with a bitter smile that they had not yet worn out the power of the curse, if curse there were.

After long days of rowing, in which every man in the boats took part in urging them up the sides of the long rollers and then down their hill-like descent,

the feeling of weary lassitude made itself more and more felt. They suffered, too, from their cramped position in the boats, but no one murmured. Even Rasp and Oakum ceased to wrangle, and the former pursed up his wrinkled mouth, and followed the example of Oakum in whistling for a favouring wind.

At times the breeze would come, and, the sails filling, the boats sped onwards; but the few miles they made before the wind again dropped seemed as nothing in the immensity of the watery space around; and at last, half delirious with the heat, after being reduced to a few drops of warm water each day, the sun went down like a great globe of fire, and Dutch Pugh felt that the time had come when they must die.

A re-arrangement of the occupants of the boat had long been made, so that both Dutch and Meldon were by those they loved, and now it seemed that the nuptial bed of the latter would be that of death. Hope seemed long before to have fled upon her bright wings, leaving only black despair to brood over them like the eternal night. Hardly a word was spoken in either boat, and once more the rope had been passed from one to the other, so that their desolate state might not become more desolate by parting company during the night.

The night in question had fallen as black as that when the schooner was blown away, but no one heeded it, neither did they listen to the ravings of poor Wilson, who lay back in the stern sheets talking of his birds, and calling some particular pet by name. Then he would whisper Bessy's name, and talk to himself constantly about his love for her, till at last the poor girl would be roused from her state of lethargy, and, laying her head on Meldon's breast, sob for a few minutes—dry hysterical sobs—and then subside once more. Oakum sat twisting up a piece of yarn, crooning scraps of old songs, and Pollo would now and then, in a half-delirious fashion, try to sing the fragment of a hymn; but these attempts had grown now more and more spasmodic, and with the knowledge bluntly felt now that they had but a few fragments to support them on the following day, and no water, all sat or lay in a kind of stupefied despair, waiting for the end.

Upon Dutch Pugh had of late fallen the leading of the little party; for Captain Studwick had fallen ill from over-exertion with his oar beneath the burning sun, and before dusk Dutch had directed a long-ing gaze round the horizon in search of a sail, but in vain; and now he sat with Hester's head resting upon his lap, her large bright eyes gazing up into his, as longingly and full of love as ever, till, in the madness of his despair, as he saw her dying before him, he had strained her wasted form to his breast, and held her there when the darkness fell.

"Is there no hope, Dutch?" she whispered to him, faintly, as her lips rested close by his ear.

"Yes, always—to the last, darling," he whispered.

"I am not afraid to die, darling," she whispered back; "it is for you. If I could only save your life."

He covered her lips with his kisses, and her arms passionately embraced his neck, till a kind of heavy stupor fell on both, even as on all the rest in the unfortunate boat. The rest of the food was eaten

next day, and then they sank back in their places to die.

But their fate was not that of Lauré, whose boat was never seen again. Ere another day had passed, a fast steamer sighted them where they lay, and bore down upon them as Pollo, the only one with strength enough left, hoisted a handkerchief upon one of the oars and held it aloft.

It was but just in time, and long and energetic was the attention required before the little party was out of danger, and by that time the port of Southampton was reached, and the next day—home.

CHAPTER LVII.—CONCLUSION.

QUITE a year elapsed before the subject was broached again from a business point of view. Mr. Parkley had been a good deal disheartened by his losses, and shook his head when Dutch suggested a second trip.

"No, no," he said, "no more chance."

"Suppose there is no chance in the matter," said Dutch, quietly; and he then proceeded to tell of that which he had kept secret in his own breast ever since—to wit, of the rich treasure of gold which he had found after the silver had been removed.

"Is this a fact, or some dream left by our troubles when coming home?" said Mr. Parkley, who looked at him in doubt.

"A fact," said Dutch; and he described exactly where the treasure lay.

"That's enough," exclaimed Mr. Parkley. "I had made a vow that I would never be tempted again; but I will this once, Dutch—this once, my lad."

He kept his word; and though Hester shivered at the idea, she saw her husband's great desire for the trip, gave way, and prevailed upon him to consent to take her.

For a time he held out, so painful were the recollections of the last trip; but on Captain Studwick taking the command of the vessel they were to sail in once more, and the doctor and his newly-made wife insisting upon accompanying them, he agreed.

Rasp insisted upon going again, because Oakum was going to interfere; and Oakum insisted on being one of the party because Rasp would be there to meddle with. Where Sam Oakum went Pollo was sure to be found.

The result was that the vessel—well found, and manned by a good crew—sailed one day, made a rough but prosperous voyage to the Gulf of Mexico, and there, in the placid weather they enjoyed, made first for one of the sunken galleons, where, after the removal of the sand, and the destruction of sundry sharks, so great a treasure in golden ingots was brought to the surface, and carefully stowed away, as made Mr. Parkley propose that they should tempt fortune no further, but up anchor and go back home.

Dutch, however, was of too manly a grit to go back without exploring the other galleon, and on this being reached, a second golden store was rescued from the wave where it had been three hundred years—a treasure large enough not only to recompense all past losses, but to make its winners wealthy for life.

So far from any imaginary curse attending this voyage, it was accomplished without difficulty, and home reached once more, with the mysteriously won treasure, of which there was much talk, but little information gained; for, saving what oozed out from the well-paid sailors, nothing was known, Mr. Parkley saying that perhaps one of the Spanish States might put in a claim.

And so ended the eventful search for the gold and silver of the Spanish galleons—wealth won by conquest by the filibustering followers of Philip of Spain, but never achieved by them, when dragged by torture from the simple-hearted Peruvians, to be hidden in the tropic sands. What might have been its purpose had the treasure reached the Spanish Court, who can tell? Suffice it that as far as money could do, it made happy several English homes, not the least happy that of the man who, with true penitence, sought in the rest of his career to make happy the woman who had been the object of his doubts. "Yes," said he, "I was mad, and bent on seeking treasure when I had a greater one at home. Ah, Hester, love, I have gone down many times, and have found strange things, but I shall never reach to the bottom of your heart, or gather all its most secret depths of love, so long as I am what I am, Dutch the Diver."

THE END.

A Whale Hunt.

ANCHORED in the harbour of Jeretik, west of the entrance to the Bay of Koa, in Russian Lapland, lay Captain Foyn's steamer *Spes and Fides*, with a large blue whale and a sulphur bottom (*Balanoptera sibbaldii*) made fast to the side of the vessel. The whale was killed on the previous evening (August 10), just outside the Bay of Eina, in the Gulf of Motka, on the south side of Rubatschij (Fisher Island); and as it was the first whale I had ever seen shot, I sat me down, when all hands had turned in, to write this account of how it was killed.

The celebrated whaler, Captain Svend Foyn, had kindly placed at my disposal the largest of his steamers, in order to examine certain parts of the coast of Murman, giving me at the same time the right to take with me a full outfit for whaling, and to keep any captures for zoological purposes.

We had left Karabella in the afternoon in a stiff north-west breeze, with a high sea on. The rolling of the small craft made it very unpleasant to sit up, and I thought it best, therefore, to turn in and take a good nap. At the entrance of the Gulf of Motka I was, however, called again by the captain telling me that several whales were in sight all around, although the wind was still too hard to venture a brush with them.

We steered westward further into the gulf, passing several whales, and came at last gradually more under lee. After a while we sighted a large blue whale rolling about mumping in the middle of a shoal of small shrimps (*Thysanopoda inermis*), abounding here in incredible masses. Every time the whale came up to the surface of the water it was surrounded by great numbers of seagulls, waiting to

take a good meal among the shrimps, and showing us the course the whale took when it dived down again into the deep. When the whale came upon a shoal of shrimps, it opened its immense jaws, and threw himself rolling into the shoal, spouting the water high into the air. But it could not have swallowed any great quantity at a time, because these manœuvres were repeated, at intervals of only a few minutes, for at least an hour.

After looking on for some time, and admiring the practical way of keeping the appetite alive by exercise between the courses, I gave the order to shoot the whale. In the stem of each of Captain Foyn's whaling steamers there stands on a pivot a cannon of about four feet in length, which, by means of suitable mechanism, can be easily turned as well up and down as sideways. This gun has a bore of about four inches, and is loaded with ordinary powder and a wadding of indiarubber. Upon this a harpoon is placed, which Mr. Foyn alone, after many years' experiments, has succeeded in bringing to such a high degree of perfection, that one need not wish for anything better.

At the foremost end of the harpoon a grenade, filled with five pounds of powder, is screwed fast. Behind this lie four strong wings provided with barbed hooks, and put together like the ribs of an umbrella. Between these a glass tube, filled with some exploding stuff, is placed in such a way that it breaks and the grenade explodes, when the wings of the harpoon open at the first movement of the whale. The shaft of the harpoon is double, and made of very tough iron, and has at the back end a ring, in which a five-inch cable of the best hemp is made fast, worked so that it can bear a tension of 37,000 pounds without breaking, which is nearly double what an ordinary ship's cable can bear. This cable runs on a windlass, constructed in such a way that a single man can, by help of the whole steam power, immediately haul in or pay out the cable, according to the movements of the whale.

Some idea may be obtained of the tremendous strength of the whale by the fact that, after the grenade of the harpoon has exploded in the interior of the whale, it sometimes happens that the animal is able to break even this strong cable, although the boat follows all its movements like a float on the surface.

This system of cannon, harpoon, and windlass is managed with the quickness of thought by a single man, and is so ingenious that one cannot help admiring the inventor, who, with a strong will and great perseverance, has succeeded in solving in a manner so practical the problem of killing and landing such whales as are exceptionally so fat as to float directly after death. The shooting itself requires, however, such rapidity and accuracy, that a good shot at whale hunting may be considered quite a treasure. But even the best may miss his aim, particularly in a high sea, or when the aim is a "fin-back" (*Balanoptera musculus*), for they often show themselves only at the surface of the water, and are much quicker in their movements, and much wilder than the fat and comparatively more phlegmatic blue whales, although even these are very quick, and tremendously strong.

Care must, however, be taken not to hit the whale in or near the tail, as the animal, thus tied to the steamer, would drag her along with unabated strength. Captain Foyn had once to sustain such a brush with a whale he had shot in the tail. Two whole days, accompanied by his wife, he was drawn about over the sea, through storm and waves, being too proud to cut the cable. At last, however, the cable broke of itself, and released him.

But to return to our whale, which, however, was far from being ours yet. The cannon was cleaned and loaded; the harpoon was put in its place; and the chase commenced in earnest. It was of stirring interest. We were often quite close to the whale, which did not seem to be in the least afraid of us. Not from any carelessness on his part, however, for he had no cause for fear, being nearly as long as our boat—that is to say, he seventy-six feet and we ninety feet long, and he being much broader, which among whales is naturally considered a sign of superior strength.

At last we had him, however, at a convenient distance, and the shot was fired. The harpoon, about four feet long, disappeared in the interior of the whale, and produced immediately a stunning effect. At first we fancied that the animal was killed outright, which not unfrequently happens; but suddenly the creature rushed downward at a tremendous rate, the cable is stretched, the harpoon strains its claws, and a dull report tells us that the grenade has exploded in the inside of the whale. Once more it stopped as if struck by lightning.

But now the wild chase commences. Raging with pain, the whale rushes along in all directions—now disappearing in the deep, now reappearing again on the surface. The leviathan thus put to our boat, tears her along in a wild course, pulling her in different directions, while the spray dashes over our bows. Every man is at his post, silently communicating with the others by signs, and all obeying the least hint of their leader. One can at once perceive how well accustomed they all are to act together. It is a struggle for life between two grappling monsters, and victory at first does not seem to incline towards our side.

Both champions carry their colours high in the air. Ours are the black, curling smoke, following in dark masses our course where we are drawn along over the waves. Those of the whale are the red colouring the sea far around, and spouting high cascades of blood, sparkling like a rain of rubies in the pale rays of the setting sun, each time he appeared on the surface of the water; while the bow of our steamer was waving like an immense sea eagle, with two broad white wings of foam.

As a silent witness of our struggle, there stood near us, on the shore, a mighty dark rock, with clouds around its head, high above the barren mountains partly covered with snow, which closed the horizon on all sides except one. There was not one smiling feature in this picture, thus forming a proper background to such a struggle between two giants.

The struggle went on for about an hour, until the strength of the whale had somewhat abated. He commenced to throw himself unconsciously here

and there, and came sometimes rushing up from the deep with such violence that about half of his body was visible above the water.

Now there might have arisen some danger for us. Fifteen years' constant wear and tear had much corroded the plates of our boat, which from the first was not overstrong. If the whale, when rushing up from the deep with its immense *vis inertia*, should have hit our boat, a formidable hole would certainly have been made in her old plates, and we might have perished. It was therefore necessary to keep a sharp look-out, and try to keep a respectful distance from our intended victim.

Yet a while, and the whale was so much weakened by loss of blood that he could be killed with spears from a lowered boat. By means of a large halter through the head and a chain put round the mighty tail, the whale was then made fast to the steamer, and towed over the twenty-four miles' distance to the harbour of Jeretik. This was easy enough, as the wind was fair, and the whale so fat that he was floating upon the water, which is a rare case with whales on the coasts of Europe.

The Bay of Motka had hitherto been a quiet place of refuge for shoals of whales, which found this at all seasons of the year best feeding ground on the whole coast of the European portion of the Arctic Sea, with abundance of shrimps, smelt, sand-eels, herrings, haddock, and cod. Every year several dead whales are found floating, which do not show any signs of external violence. Of these, there is one now and then that is fat, but most of them are miserably lean. Pity that the Laplanders, who are fighting for their blubbers with bears and wolves, have so sadly neglected their anatomical studies; as otherwise the Laplanders of the Motka Gulf would be able to furnish much more interesting information about the pathology of whales than any *collegium medicum*.

Last year a female whale floated up, which had three vertebræ almost dissolved. The greater number probably die from old age—a complaint which, I hope, will not claim so many victims for the future, when, on the narrow headland of only a few thousand feet width between the peninsulas Rybatshij and Srednij, a whale sanatorium has been erected, whose steamers can fetch in the patients on the one side from the Motka Bay, and on the other side from the Russian part of the Varanger Bay, where whales abound much more than in the Norwegian part of it. As I have already one whale on the stocks of Capt. Foyn's place at Vadso, which an assistant preparator is dissecting and preparing for the Royal Museum in Stockholm, I intend to present my Russian whale to the Imperial Museum in St. Petersburg, which is the more desirable, as hitherto no whale from European Russia has found a place in any museum.

The above-mentioned headland is remarkable for its rich vegetation, considering its high northern latitude. Although it lies considerably above the boundary line for the growth of trees, it has birch trees of twenty to thirty feet in height. These, it is true, are badly treated by the storms of the Arctic Sea, and have turned themselves round about several times, in order to seek out a calmer place. But

in recompense for their perseverance, they have got so unusually full a crown, that they now most resemble thick fruit trees.

If you add to this a great quantity and rich growth of here unexpected flowers, it is not astonishing that the Norwegian sailors exclaimed several times, "This looks like a beautiful garden." It is a good sign that flowers are thriving, for these human beings will also thrive. Strangely enough, I found here *Linnea Borealis*, which seems to indicate that the limit of the pine was formerly further north than at present, for now the first pine trees are only met with twenty-four miles farther south. In this locality I searched in vain for any trace even of pine roots.—*Field*.

Heat for the House.

CARBON is king—in one sense; and his crown is derived, much as Cotton's was, from circumstances. For a king-hating people, Americans crown more despots than any other.

King Carbon rules in many forms—coal, kerosene, gas. Just now we witness a sort of domestic civil war in the realms of this potentate; and the fighting is somewhat triangular. The special point at issue to-day is between the heaters with coal and those with gas, or between steam-heating and gas-heating, as applied to cities. The matter comes up now by reason of the fact that Mayor Ely, of this city, has recommended that an ordinance be passed by the Board of Aldermen giving the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund power to grant precinct privileges to certain persons to carry steam for heating purposes through mains underground in New York. This he has done, after hearing argument on both sides, both by the Corporation asking the privilege and by the coal dealers and gas companies, mainly the former. This recommendation by Mayor Ely is well-nigh tantamount to an assurance that the local concession will be finally accorded to the persons seeking it—the Holly combination, as it is usually called.

Major Ely's controlling reason—after being convinced that the scheme itself was not chimerical—for forwarding the present movement seems to be the fact that the Holly system has been actually tried with some success on a small scale, at least. This trial will be noticed more fully a little further on. The idea now finding its promise of fulfilment is to give the Holly Company an area of about a quarter of a mile square in which to put down pipes and to supply steam to those who want it—steam for heating and cooking. The company is to give bonds for the damages (if any) contingent upon laying the mains and pipes. The area has not yet been designated. This privilege is granted to one company, and when the success of the local experiment is achieved, there must be another grand fight among the several applicants for this steam-heating task. There are already, and have been for many weeks, quite a number of competitors.

The things which the steam-heating companies propose to do with their appliances are:—(1) To heat houses, offices, dépôts, &c., as coal is now doing; (2) cook, with a stove which the company

manufacture and sell; (3) heat water; (4) put out fires; and (5) remove snow. The friends of the enterprise urge on its behalf that—

1. It now costs this city as much as six hundred thousand dollars a year to warm the public buildings—such as court-houses, school-houses, police-stations, hospitals, &c.; whereas with steam it can be done for four hundred thousand dollars. It now costs two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a year to cart off the ashes from residences, which would not have to be done were there no fuel burned; but this calculation probably means refuse in general, and steam would dispense with only the ashes, whilst the rest would need carting off just the same. It now costs the city many thousands of dollars (it is 1.25 dollars a load), but with a system of steam "hydrants" and hose the snow could be removed by melting it, in twenty minutes, at about one-tenth the present cost.

2. By removing fires from houses it would reduce the cost of rates of insurance one or one and a-half per cent.; and that, considering the immense sums paid to fire insurance companies, would be a vast saving all round; how much does not appear.

3. Indoors—in the domestic *ménage*, that is to say—the housekeeper can dispense with that portion of his "help," whose duties are to cut wood, carry coal, attend furnaces, and all that sort of thing. The system claims for itself such simplicity of taps, cocks, and regulators, that a mere child can regulate the whole apparatus. The company can regulate the pressure upon each house, letting on two hundred pounds, or twenty, or two, if so needed.

4. The manufacturer who pays fifty dollars a week to keep his steam power in motion will be enabled to buy his steam ready made, for, they here claim, about half that money.

5. Water can be heated in pipes for all uses, at rates much below ordinary coal-furnace rates. The advocates urge that "by means of this contrivance, operated by the ordinary steam pressure in each house, without extra pumps or engines, water can be drawn for bathing and toilet purposes in every apartment, or fed to a tank in the attic above; and this water can be hot or drawn cool at pleasure. Steam is discharged directly, yet without noise, into water in bath tubs or elsewhere, raising it in a very few minutes to the boiling point, and thus doing away with the old system of hot water circulation in houses."

6. Cooking is done with a patent steam stove, of which the company has control, and probably all the competing companies have their own pet patents. In many large hotels cooking is now done by steam, instead of by fire; and the proposed plan only extends the idea to smaller establishments. Here, also, they reiterate the advantages of safety, and convenience of having heat without inflammable material or direct fire. In summer, when extra heat is to be avoided, the new plan promises well. It has all the advantages of kerosene, which is now a good deal used for summer cooking in New York especially, and of gas-stove cooking, in the absence of fire and its attendant dangers. Kerosene is not in general use, mainly on account of its costliness in appliances; and gas cooking is still more expensive.

7. Laundries, greenhouses, conservatories, bathing establishments, &c., can be served, the advocates maintain, both better and more cheaply than by separate heating appliances with either coal or wood.

8. As to fire-engines, we are told they will be greatly simplified in construction, and the cost reduced one-half or more, as the local boiler and furnace will be entirely dispensed with. The engine will find its steam on the curbstone adjoining the fire, just as it now finds its water there—that is, steam and water both are ready for use on arrival. This engine will be comparatively cheap and portable. The proximity of steam and water can be easily arranged to prevent the possibility, always to be considered in cold climates, of the water being frozen.

9. And lastly—this also in connection with burning buildings—they assure us that the application of steam or vapour as an extinguisher of fire (a thing very common now in the oil regions of Pennsylvania) will be made by this arrangement. In burning buildings the fire is sometimes under floors, between ceilings, or in some close place where it cannot be reached with water. Steam can often so reach it, especially if the spaces where fire is are above, whither steam will rise by its rarity. Steam injected into rooms, before the fire has reached them, will render the furniture and wooden walls almost incombustible, and thus arrest or retard the progress of the conflagration.

The test or trial of this Holly plan of heating cities by steam, referred to above, was made in the comparatively small town of Lockport, in Niagara county of this State, near Niagara Falls. In June of last year (1877) half a mile of pipes underground was laid, which enabled the company to learn the exact capacity of the pipes to carry steam, as well as the exact rate of loss by condensation. Then three miles of pipes were laid, there being one continuous length of a mile and a third. Very little of the piping was larger than four inches diameter. Last winter the earnest work of the experiment was done. Lockport is a little north of forty-three degrees north latitude, and is considered to be in a cold region. The company during last winter and summer have heated about forty dwellings, a large school-house (one hundred and five thousand cubic feet), and the largest hall in the town, besides furnishing steam to run two engines, one of them about half a mile distant from the boiler-house, and are now supplying steam for a number of other purposes. Houses a mile away, they find, are heated as readily as those near the source of heat. They have three boilers—two horizontal, five feet by sixteen, and one upright. Most of the time one boiler is sufficient, and it is only during the severest cold that they run two. Two firemen do all the work—one day, one night. The same force can run four hundred houses as well as forty. They believe, from their experience thus far, that, with sufficient boiler capacity and pipes of proper size, an area of at least four miles square can be heated from one set of boilers. In large cities they reckon ten boilers would suffice. The Holly is “a system of high pressure in the mains and low pressure

in the service pipes,” and thus, it is represented, “much smaller and less expensive mains and pipes are attached than those necessary in the usual exclusively low-pressure system of steam heating.” Low pressure, it seems, is sufficient for single buildings, but not for cities. The Holly mains decrease from eight inches to one inch, as they divide and sub-divide. The pipes are covered and bound with non-conducting materials, which are important features of the discovery. The mains are inserted in logs of wood bored for the purpose, and sunk in ditches laid with tiles, three to five feet deep, running above the gas and water pipes. Expansion junction-boxes are used to prevent the ill effects of expansion in the iron—that is, to compensate for the expansion. These are put at intervals of from one hundred to two hundred feet along the lines. With this experience, and the mayor's favour, it seems likely that the Holly system of warming by steam will be tried in some district in the city early in the coming spring. It is not proposed to break earth until after the frost.

Meanwhile, there are two other parties opposed to the whole scheme, by whomsoever tried, who will fight the project *à outrance*. These two are the coal dealers and the insurance agents. The arguments of both these opponents are perfectly transparent. Gas companies are also to be ranked among the opposition, for the reason that they are doing their utmost to introduce gas as a heating agency. The gas-stove business has rather languished of late, and lives only in the desperate fight that gas manufacturers are making with the new electric light movement. Again, there are the kerosene vendors and makers. They are interested in keeping back anything that generates and supplies heaters and cookers.

At the present moment, however, the steam-heating movement is in such a condition as renders it probable that within three months we shall have the experiment tried in our midst. Having succeeded at Lockport, there is no reason why it will not succeed in New York; and having succeeded in experiment in a prescribed district here, there is no reason why it should not be adopted all over the city. Warmed by steam and lighted by electricity, New York will be in the front rank of advanced cities.

PROFESSOR TYNDALL has communicated to the Royal Society the results of some further observations on infusions boiled in flasks afterwards hermetically sealed. He took with him to the Alps last summer one hundred tubes of infusions—fifty containing turnip, and fifty containing cucumber infusion. They were prepared at the laboratory of the Royal Institution, and boiled for five minutes. Twenty flasks were broken in transit. The eighty remained pellucid, and the twenty were turbid with organisms. A number of the eighty flasks had their ends opened in air in which sawdust had been shaken up, and all were soon turbid. Another set were infected by water of a cascade derived from melting snow, and in three days were thickly charged with organisms. Another set were opened in pure air, and remained transparent. These results confirm Professor Tyndall's previous observations.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Mutiny.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XVIII.—"NOW FOR IT."

PAYNE stood for an instant, with his foot on the first rung of the ladder, and listened, hoping it might be the major's native servant; but he was soon assured that, instead of the sound of one man's feet, he heard the steady tramp of a small body of men.

"Sent out to fetch me," he thought. "Well, they will not find it an easy matter."

The next minute he was on the top of the wall, drawing the ladder up after him to lower it on the other side, just as a company of men, with their captain, came round the corner, on their way to strengthen another part of the fort.

He heard the words "Spy," and "Fire!" as he slipped down, just in time to escape the shots which pelted over after him.

Stopping an instant under the shelter of the wall, he looked round to see which would be the best way to run. A quick glance showed him native buildings on the right, mutineers to the left, engaged in an attack on the gate, and right before him a tope of trees, which at least offered a slight prospect of concealment, could he but reach it.

The intervening ground was terribly exposed, but Payne did not wait till the prospect should damp his courage. Gathering up all his energies, he dashed towards the tope, while it seemed to him that bullets came from all sides.

"Whizz!" That one grazed his arm, and made him feel savage, but he did not lessen his speed for a second. Another minute and he was in shelter, still pressing forward, though, till he felt he must be invisible to those who had fired.

"Idiots," he said, angrily, to himself, "they fire at their own friends for all they can tell to the contrary."

"It's rather hard on a fellow to be made a target for both sides."

His arm bled a little, but the wound was very slight, and, in spite of the smart, was soon forgotten. For a little while he stood thoughtfully considering the best mode of operations.

"It's a bother that villain not turning up," he thought.

"I should have been glad of him for several reasons. And now what's to be done first? I want to join Vaughan and Morley if they are on the right track. But suppose they are not! Then it seems the first thing is to try and hear where Miss Stafford and Dora are. By Jove, I say, old fellow," he said, looking down at his unaccustomed garb, and holding out first one arm and then the other, to look attentively at them, "your life depends on the exactness of this disguise. Well, that confounded interfering little fool, Miller, didn't know me, which is encouraging."

He walked briskly forward through the tope, taking as nearly as he could tell from different landmarks the same direction as the road by which the regiment had come to Chutnegunj.

"Concealment looks suspicious," thought Payne. "If I do any good by myself it will be through sheer disregard of danger. I must seek the natives, not avoid them."

Acting on this resolve, he came out into the open, going on at a steady, regular pace, that soon put a good distance between him and the fort. The sun beat down fiercely on his head, and the white, fine dust rose and made his eyes smart; but he scarcely noticed either the one or the other.

For some time he was allowed to pursue his course unmolested, though he saw parties of sowars in the distance, and passed not far from an outpost of the enemy.

However, he was not long to be so favoured by fortune. After about a couple of miles, during which he had seen no one, he came suddenly upon a picket of natives, who had been hidden by an intervening patch of jungle.

The ensign was immediately seized, and some talking ensued, resulting in a couple of men separating from the rest to conduct him away. He made no resistance, and took not the slightest notice of any inquiries addressed to him, until he found himself in the presence of the subadar, so native captain, whose company was halting for the day in a mango tope.

The subadar asked him several questions, to which he only replied by touching his ears and lips in succession, and shaking his head. That his meaning was understood was evident, for remarks or queries were no longer made to him.

Payne looked on and listened, with wonder and a trifle of amusement, in spite of the danger of his situation, as the subadar, in a sharp, authoritative way, spoke to the men who had brought him in. The proceedings were so like those of a European regiment.

After hearing all his captors had to say, the captain gave orders to have him searched. This was done in precise military fashion, but without bringing to light any paper, or disclosing anything suspicious; and, apparently satisfied, or nearly so, the subadar gave him into the charge of three men, with instructions to keep an eye on him, but to do him no injury on account of his affliction, which rendered him powerless to take any verbal report to the Feringhees. Written message he had none, they were assured.

During the rest of the day the young man remained with the party of mutineers, apparently dull and stupid, and taking no heed of anything. In reality, though, he watched every motion of the sepoys, striving to learn anything of manner or action that should render his disguise more complete.

He listened, too, without appearing to do so, to everything that was said, and groaned bitterly in spirit at his want of knowledge of the native language. The only familiar word that occurred every now and then was Chutnegunj, from which he guessed that these men were on their way to join in the assault of that place.

"Oh, if I had but found the major's servant before I started!" he said to himself. "I cannot believe he meant to get out of it, he was so in earnest;

and he would be almost as good as an acquaintance with Hindustani."

Beside the sepoys in uniform, there were, resting in their company, a number of ryots and villagers, who had joined them in their passage across the country, with the intention of assisting in the downfall of the hated Feringhees.

As daylight faded, and rapid preparations were made for marching, Payne found himself among these camp followers, listening to their, to him, unintelligible chattering, and wondering how he was to get away—for he had no wish to be taken back to the fort—when he started violently, for a voice suddenly hissed in his ear—

"Do not look round. I am here."

There was no doubt about it. They were the guttural, peculiar tones of the major's servant.

The ensign felt his heart quicken its pulsations, with the pleasure of the feeling that the assistance he had counted on was not lost to him. He restrained himself by a strong effort from turning to let his eyes prove that his ears had not deceived him. Lighting his chullum, he began to smoke.

The bustle and noise went on around him as before, and he was beginning to ask himself whether his excited imagination had not suggested the words, when a second whisper came from close behind him—

"Seem to go with them, sahib. There will be no moon. We can leave them in the dark."

Payne's lips parted to make a reply, but he caught the eyes of a sepoy fixed upon him, recollected himself, and was silent.

They were soon on the march, the young ensign grudging every step that seemed but time wasted, as it led him further and further from his object; but there was a sepoy on either side, and at present he felt there was no help for it.

He had not, even then, seen his native companion, but no doubt existed in his mind that he was there somewhere.

Darker and darker it grew, so that at the end of about two miles it was impossible to distinguish faces.

"Now for it," he thought; and as he walked he contrived unnoted to let himself slip into the row behind him. He would not have been able to do this had there been the complete order and regularity of an English regiment; but the slight confusion existing assisted him, and as he had originally been in the rear, he soon found himself among the camp followers.

Could he get away before the two sepoys noticed his absence? As he asked himself that question, a hand was laid on his arm, and he followed its guidance till he found himself crouching by the side of the road behind some bushes, and listening to the trampling of feet passing, and then getting further away till it was only a confused sound in the distance.

"Now, sahib, we are safe," said his companion.

"Don't let us be too sure," said Payne, coming from his hiding place. "I shall not be satisfied till we have put a good distance between us and them. Let us run."

Suiting the action to the word, he started at a pace

that required all the native's power to keep up with him.

The dark, ghostly-looking palms and patches of jungle of gloomy aspect glided past them and united together in dimly seen masses in the distance, while others came into view before them, seeming so like the last in the distance that they might have fancied themselves the subjects of some spell which condemned them to run round and round in the same circle for ever.

Stopping now and then for breath, and to look back to see if they were pursued, they kept on silently, seeming to fly over the dusty ground, the tall, slightly-formed ensign being a swift runner, and feeling now as though life—more than life—depended on the distance placed between him and the company of sepoys.

Suddenly, without a word of warning, the native sank to the ground. Payne had left him some yards behind before he could stop himself.

He came back quickly with a sinking heart.

"What is it?" he said, kneeling down and raising the other's head.

"Nothing, sahib," said the poor fellow, making an effort to sit up. "I have gone many miles to-day, but I shall be ready to go on directly."

Payne assisted him to the side of the road, and placed him where he could lean his back against a tree. With a half-suppressed sigh at this misfortune, he sat down by his side.

"We will have a good rest," he said. "Where were you when I came away from the fort, Peter?"

He had adopted the use of that name at first, when he had agreed to accept the man's services, as it was the first that occurred to him, his real name being too much for an English tongue.

"After I left master this morning, when we had made master look like a Hindoo, I went to old master, and asked him to give me a chitty, and let me go. He kicked me—told me a great fool not to know when I got a good master. I came away from the fort, over the wall."

"I wish to heaven I had some brandy," said Payne, half aloud. "I shall kick that major some day, if I live, to see how he likes it himself—a brute."

The native, whose voice had gradually faded into silence, began again.

"I went to Mnea Rut Bahadoor, who orders the sepoys outside the gate, sahib. I say, 'Look here,' and show him my kicks. 'Let me help to kill the Feringhee dogs. Tell me what to do.'"

There was something very weird and strange about the ensign's position, sitting there in the sultry night, with a half-drowsy sensation stealing over him, as he listened to the low, monotonous tones of his companion.

As he paused in his narrative, the peculiar cry of numerous jackals sounded, with a pertinacity that made the young man long to fire amongst them.

"He say, 'Here is a letter. Give it into the hands of one of the sepoy regiments at Bagra.' Here it is."

The native drew a paper from his cummerbund, and showed it to Payne, returning it to its place the next minute.

"I came away, and saw master far off, running to the trees. I could not catch master till he was with those sepoys. The captain asked me who I am. I show him this paper. He say there mutiny already at Bagra. I must come back with him."

"Well, and did you hear anything from them of the ladies?"

"Yes, sahib. They are with the Rajah of Krohl. It is not very far."

Payne started to his feet with an exclamation.

"You knew that! Why did you not tell me before?"

"Could not tell master both at once," said the major's servant, quietly, but with a shrinking movement that was not lost on the other, dark as it was.

Impatient as he was to be going on, he could not find it in his heart to drag his self-hired attendant further without allowing him a little more rest.

"Peter," he said, sharply.

"Yes, master."

"Go to sleep for an hour while I keep watch, and then we must get on."

Instead of complying, Peter rose to his feet.

"I am ready now, master."

They started again at a steady walk, left the main road for a turning to the right, and when the sun rose were well on their way to the palace of the rajah.

CHAPTER XIX.—"TIE HIM TO THAT TREE."

DORA saw the gleam of the little jewelled dagger, and, starting up with a faint cry, she was struggling desperately with the midnight visitor for the possession of the weapon.

Who this was she could not at first imagine, but suddenly, like a flash, came the recollection of the words—

"Ranee Mulla jealous."

There was no doubt about it, it was the owner of the pair of dark eyes.

Mabel, awakened by the noise, slight though it was, sat up trembling, and unable to tell what was going on, there not being sufficient light to show her from whom came the muttered words and panting breath. She would have screamed for help but for the same reason that held Dora mute—the message that they had received that evening. Might not the arousing of the palace mean the destruction of some cleverly-contrived scheme for their escape?

"Help, Mabel!" gasped Dora's voice, hoarsely; and the next minute the Ranee found herself fighting against odds. Mabel, who had at last become aware of the position of affairs, grasped at the little weapon, and held on to it with a grasp that all the other's efforts could not shake off.

It did not seem strange to Dora or Mabel at the minute, so excited were they by this fierce struggle, when the Ranee's beautiful, passionate face became illuminated by a dull, red glow, that showed the angry fire in her eyes.

All this had but occupied a few minutes. The Ranee seemed to be getting the worst of it, when all at once her eyes turned towards the window.

In an instant the expression of anger and fierce, jealous hatred changed to one of intense horror. She gave a wild cry that rang out above a confusion of voices which began to be heard, wrenched herself

away, leaving the dagger in Mabel's hand, and fled from the room.

The two girls, panting and breathless, turned to see a red light, gradually increasing, rendering visible the courtyard, with figures hurrying beneath their window as they threw it open and leaned out.

They could gather nothing from the shouts and exclamations that filled the air, for they were all in Hindustani; but it needed no words to tell them what was the matter.

"Mabel," said Dora, laying her icy-cold hand in that of her friend, "the palace is on fire."

"I know it. Let us try and get away; who knows but that in the confusion—"

She stopped, for at that instant the young Hindoo girl the rajah had given them came running into the room.

"Come," she said, excitedly, "you shall escape. Follow me."

The girls hesitated.

"Where would you take us? Dora, don't let us trust her. Perhaps she is sent by Ismail."

"Quick, quick! It will be too late," cried the maid, and she caught at their hands and tried to draw them to the door.

"No," said Mabel, in a determined tone; "we will stay here."

"Miss Dora, you come," said the girl, imploringly. "See, there is fire."

"No, no, I dare not. The rajah has sent you."

"He has not. Oh, come, do come," and the dark girl burst into tears, sobbing out entreaties in her own language.

"Dora," said Mabel, with sudden resolution, "remember, she brought the note. I will go."

Dora acquiesced, and the next minute they were following their slave maiden. Along dark passages they went, up and down flights of stairs, until they felt quite hopeless of retracing their steps should they wish to do so.

At last, at the end of a long passage, they came out into the moonlight, apparently at the other side of the palace. Two natives were awaiting them, at the sight of whom their hearts sank.

"Come quickly, this way," said the taller of the two, touching Dora's arm.

"I will not," she said, firmly. "Mabel, we have been deceived. Come back."

"No, no, Miss Vaughan. For Heaven's sake, let us lose no time."

"Who are you, then?" asked Dora, as they stepped out of the doorway. "I know your voice, but that is all."

"Harry Payne. This way, quick."

They hurried after him for a short distance, till they came to where a ladder was leaning against the wall.

"There is another on the other side," said Payne to the girls. "You go first, Peter, and see if all is safe."

Peter signed that all was well from the top, and disappeared.

"Miss Stafford, you next," said the ensign; and Mabel and Dora were soon over. The maid went next, and, last of all, Payne, who drew the ladder up after him, and let it down on the other side.

"Now," he said, as they all stood with the wall which had seemed such an insurmountable barrier to their escape between them and the dreaded Rajah Ismail. "Now we must hurry into shelter, or this glare will betray us."

They passed down some narrow streets, led by the native, to whom the place seemed familiar, and were before long in the open country, walking on a good road, and leaving the glow of the fire further and farther away.

"Can you walk fast like this for an hour or so, Miss Vaughan?" said Payne. "You see, everything depends on how far off we are before they find out."

"Yes, oh, yes," said Dora, eagerly. "I will run if you like, only let us get away."

"And you, Miss Stafford?"

Mabel made a half-impatient sign in the affirmative, and, after halting to take breath and look back at the orange-coloured clouds floating over the burning palace, they hurried on without speaking.

With intervals of resting, the flight was kept on almost in silence till the first streak of dawn appeared in the sky.

The world was just beginning to awake, when Dora, utterly worn out with the agitation and excitement of the night, and the ensuing hours of swift walking, gave a little sigh, and would have fallen to the ground, but the ensign started to her side and caught her.

Without a word he carried her in among the trees, for the road here skirted a forest, and laid her down gently on the grass and dried leaves.

As they endeavoured to restore her to consciousness, Mabel, herself exhausted so that she had found it hard to drag her limbs along, saw a look in Payne's eyes as he bent over Dora, gazing at her fair, marble-white face, that was to her a revelation. He looked up, their eyes met, and the ensign coloured deeply through the dye with which he was stained.

Dora sighed and opened her eyes, starting the next minute into a sitting posture, to look on all sides, as though expecting to see the rajah behind some bush, watching them.

"Did I faint?" she said. "Oh, pray let us go on. They will find us and take us back if we stay here."

A short consultation was held, ending in their deciding to go further into the forest, there to remain for the hours when the sun's power was greatest; as after a long rest they would be better able to get well on the way at night.

As they sat and reclined in a sheltered nook among the trunks of the trees, while the leafy branches formed a thick roof overhead, the ensign had leisure to observe how white and worn the two girls looked, Dora especially. The latter seemed a different being from the girl whose eyes had filled with tears when he had first addressed her, and had seen a puzzled pain in her face he had been at a loss to understand.

"And now, Mr. Payne," said Mabel, after a long silence, "will you tell us how we come to be so deeply indebted to you? Did not my father send out after us when we were missed?"

Payne gave a brief account of all that had occurred.

"Then you know nothing of those who first went out?"

"Nothing."

There was a pause, during which Dora covered her face with her hands. Here was a new trouble, for who could tell what had become of those four brave men? Mabel put her arm round her friend and tried to whisper hope, but her voice broke down in a sob. The Indian maid wept for sympathy, and Payne got up hastily and walked slowly to where the major's servant was perched on the bough of a tree keeping watch to guard against surprises.

When he returned to the group, Mabel made him a sign to be silent; for Dora was sleeping, like a tired child, with her head on the lap of the Hindoo girl, whose dark fingers played with her long, fair hair, which had escaped from its fastenings.

Mabel walked a few steps away with Payne, and gave him her hand.

"You have acted very gallantly. We can never thank you enough."

"Do not try," said the ensign, with a sudden return of bashfulness. "It makes one feel like a fool."

She smiled in spite of herself at the strange mixture of boy and man that characterized Payne through his disguise.

"I wonder I did not know you at once," she said, looking him over. "You are so like yourself, in spite of your dress and colour. But I do not now understand how you came to be permitted to go and come among the rajah's servants."

"It was partly through shamming deaf and dumb, and partly through the paper I told you of that the vil—Peter there possessed. If we were on our way to incite the native regiment at Bagra to mutiny, we could not be spies. As mutiny had already broken out there, and the need for us to go was over, we offered him our services. I see it all plainly enough now. Ismail, who meant to be on the safe side, was becoming convinced that the rule of the English was over, and would in a day or two have given up all that humbug about wishing them well, and so on."

"And how did you find out where we were?"

"Peter made friends with your little slavey, and promised to bring her away too if she would help us. She agreed, and behaved like a little trump. Well, I found that the place was so well guarded, and that you were kept so close—for we heard exactly how you were placed from the girl—that Peter and I, almost in despair, thought of a desperate expedient. We managed to set the other end of the palace on fire."

"You did?"

"Yes. It seemed our only hope, and, thank Heaven," said Payne, removing his turban, "it succeeded."

Mabel's lips quivered.

"What have we ever done that men should dare so much for our sake? I shall always think of you as a brother. What's that?"

It was a warning exclamation from the native, as he slipped to the ground, just as there was the sudden crackling of dry twigs and rustling of bushes.

Dora sprang to her feet with a cry, and Payne was at her side in an instant.

"Follow me," he said, hoarsely, to the others, taking Dora's hand in his, and leading the way quickly towards the interior of the forest. However, he caught the gleam of a white robe, and turned back to try another direction, only to hear voices. This was the case on every side, and a minute later he stood still, with his boyish face hardening into a look of desperate determination, as he drew out a tulwar which had been concealed under the folds of his clothing.

"We are surrounded," he said hurriedly to Mabel and Dora. "Keep close behind me, with your backs to this tree."

As a party of natives emerged from the shade around, he placed himself directly in front of the two girls, Peter with tulwar ready, faced one way, and the Hindoo girl, grasping a little dagger, faced the other; so that the tree forming the fourth protection, Mabel and Dora could not be touched without their brave defenders being first removed from their positions.

What was the astonishment of the two girls to see, instead of the Rajah Ismail, Jhod Rao approaching.

Rao came a little forward from the men and stood still opposite Payne, with a calm, scornful smile on his face.

"Give up," he said, in good English. "Why should we shed blood? We are many, you are but two. Yield up your weapons."

"I remember you, Jhod Rao," said Payne, "though, no doubt, you have forgotten when we met before."

"You are a Feringhee, I see," said Rao. "But I will not be hard. Give up those ladies, and you shall go without injury."

The ensign made no reply.

"The fair-haired maiden is mine," said Rao, who seemed in no hurry to come to blows, but prolonged the dialogue so as to give the young man time to think; "but the other belongs to Ismail."

He smiled as his eyes fell on the two of whom he spoke, clinging together, and listening, pale to the lips, to his words.

"Take that tulwar from him," he said, suddenly.

The natives closed round, but shrank back from Payne's threatening aspect.

Rao spoke again, and his men made a sudden rush on the young ensign, whose blade laid five men prostrate before it was wrenched from him, and he made captive, after a desperate struggle.

"Do not hurt him," said Rao, in Hindustani. "Tie him to that tree."

He pointed to one that stood by itself in an open space, and his orders were quickly obeyed.

The major's servant was secured to another at a little distance; the maid disarmed, after she had inflicted several severe cuts with her dagger; and Dora and Mabel placed in the custody of some natives.

"Fetch up the elephants and camels," said the baboo. "We will rest here."

"What shall you do with him?" asked the Hindoo

girl, indicating Payne by a nod of the head, for her hands were tied.

Baboo Jhod Rao looked intently at Dora as he replied, "He shall be executed before we move from here."

Training the Collie.

A WRITER in the *Poultry Bulletin* gives the following description of how the collie should be trained:—

"There has been much said and written about the great intelligence and sagacity of the shepherd dog, particularly the Scotch collie, and yet his merits are not over-estimated in the least. We have known and have bred them for years, have sent them to almost all parts of the country, and have always received favourable reports from the purchasers. In all reasonable things the Scotch collie will give unbounded satisfaction, and no more trusty or faithful friend can be had than he will invariably prove himself to be; but those who expect him to do their work in their own particular way, without having first been taught how it should be done, will be disappointed. The dogs will herd, drive, and tend sheep naturally, for they have been bred for this purpose for so many years that it has become an inherent propensity; but they must be accustomed to the stock and the stock to them, and must be brought to understand just how you wish your particular work done, before you can expect them to prove entirely satisfactory. This is one of the greatest troubles which is experienced by purchasers of trained dogs, for they expect to have them start in, the first morning they arrive, and drive the stock well; and they disappoint their owner, as any one would well know they would if he would give the subject any thought.

"Generally, much better satisfaction is experienced by purchasing a pup, and then gradually accustoming him to your own particular work, than in bullying a well-trained dog. The very first thing to do when you get your pup is to accustom him to your voice and command; and until you do this thoroughly you cannot commence handling your dog. The best and soonest way to do this is to always feed him yourself, and make it a point not to permit the pup to be played with and mauled while too young. Our advice to those who want to have a first-class dog is to let the pup run comparatively wild, so it does not get into mischief, until he is at least eight or ten months old, by which time he will have gotten steadier and more easily managed, though you can in the meantime take him with you when you go for your stock. Do not force your dog, but let him take to his work gradually, and by all means treat him kindly, for there is one peculiarity about this breed: if you break the will of the pup by harsh treatment—which is as useless as it is cruel—the dog will be useless. After he has once reached full growth with his courage unimpaired, there is but little danger of having him made cowardly and sneaking.

"Whether a dog be a good one when full grown or not depends a great deal on the one who handles it; for a violent-tempered man will make a cowardly

dog out of his pup, while a careful, kind and considerate man will soon have an animal which will repay him for all his care, for it will be invaluable in herding, driving and tending almost all kinds of stock; will be invaluable as a watch dog, carefully guarding the premises at all times, and will be a source of pleasure to the members of his owner's family. We know of no dog which will better please the farmer, stock-breeder, poultry-fancier or country gentleman than a well-bred Scotch collie."

A Pleasant Person.

A NOVEL exhibition in anatomy has been given to the students of Rush Medical College. At four o'clock, the large amphitheatre lecture-room was filled with fledged and unfledged doctors, and in the arena stood Charles Warren, a man of about thirty years of age, of athletic appearance, and apparently jointed the same as ordinary mortals. But he soon showed that he differed from most men in his make-up, for there was hardly a joint in his whole body that he could not throw out of place, or at least give that appearance. He went through with his distortions, much to the amazement as well as the amusement of all. He commenced by giving a circulatory movement to the scapulae, moving either one or both at a time, and without any apparent motion of the shoulders. He then threw the humerus into the axilo, disjoined his elbow, wrist, and phalanges. This was done merely by the contraction of the muscles of the arm, and not by the pulling of one member by another. In none of his feats was there any such wrench of one joint from another. Without touching any part of his body with his hands, the joints would move out of position. He forced the femur from the thigh-bone. This he could do while standing on one or both feet, or while reclining. The dislocation caused an apparent shortening of the limb. Another striking feat was the turning of his feet so that he could touch the bottom of them while his legs were perfectly straight. Perhaps the most remarkable of all his powers was the wonderful expansibility of his chest. Medical works, upon the strength of examinations of thousands of men in the army and navy, generally give five inches as the maximum of expansion. The exhibitor could expand his form nine to twelve inches. Those who did not take much interest in other performances were wonder-struck at this. This feat was performed by the remarkable degree of the compressibility of the chest, and his power to force his heart and lungs into the abdominal cavity, and then of the power to force his viscera into his chest. The abdomen was hardly less curious when the viscera was forced upwards by the diaphragm than was the inflated chest. At such time there seemed to be an entire absence of organs in that part of the body, and to be no distance at all from the front walls of the abdomen to the spinal column.

This subject proved a fine study in the anatomy of the muscles, because he could contract them so as to show the position of each one from origin to insertion. He had this power over the muscles in pairs or separately, and could make them as distinct as if dissected.

Mr. Warren concluded with an exhibition of his ability to contort his whole body, drawing himself through rings, and performing other things, much to the amusement of the students and the professors, if they had only felt at liberty to give way to laughter. Mr. Warren has a daughter who takes after himself, and can dislocate her joints with such ease that they sound like rattles.

Beasts in Cold Weather.

AT the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, are assembled living specimens from all quarters of the globe, and from every variety of climate. These creatures, being mostly of a wild nature, are best observed when everything is quiet, and they are comparatively undisturbed by human beings. A fall of snow just coming on determined me to inspect the Zoological Gardens, in order to observe the effect of frost and snow, and the general appearance of things in mid-winter. When standing opposite the out-of-door thermometer, in the midst of the blinding snow, noting that the mercury stood at 27°0, five degrees of frost, I was delighted by the unexpected appearance of my friend Mr. Bartlett, who, careful as he ever is, had come out to look after the welfare of his animals in the snow.

Among all living animals, whether biped or quadruped, the Polar bear had the happiest time of it. His pond was quite frozen over, and the snow falling through the bars of his den had accumulated to a considerable thickness. In the midst of the snow lay the Polar bear on his back; every now and then he rolled himself round in the snow, as though very grateful for such an unaccustomed luxury; then, turning on his side, he would toss about and play with great lumps of ice, teaching us how little chance a seal would have if once within the grasp of this powerful brute. Every now and then he would lift his head, and with open nostrils sniff the air in all directions.

These Polar bears have a wonderful power of scenting from very long distances—a faculty often very useful to him, but sometimes very fatal to him; for when the Arctic whalers are boiling down seal or whale blubber, the Polar bear scents the savoury odour from afar, and will follow up the line for immense distances, an expedition resulting in their losing their own jackets. The Polar bear at this time of the year wears the warmest great coat it is possible to conceive; it is snow-proof and it is water-proof. A wonderful provision has been given to him to prevent his slipping when traversing the icebergs or icefloes. Between the interspaces of the pads of his feet project fringes of hair, which give him a firm foothold on the ice, on the principle that the old woman binds a piece of list flannel round her shoe when the streets are slippery.

It was very remarkable to notice the attitude of other bears under the peculiar circumstances of this day. Nature has provided that the bears which live in cold, snowy countries should hibernate in the winter time. The face of the Himalayan bear presented a strange mixture of want of resolution and discomfort. Feeling instinctively that by rights he ought to hibernate, he had scraped

together all the sawdust from the bottom of his den, and had therewith made a kind of nest up in one corner. He was evidently very sleepy, and not very hungry, his accumulated fat affording a most beautiful natural provision against short commons when food is scarce. Another instance of this was a second species of mountain bear. He also had collected the sawdust, and seemed very much inclined to take his winter sleep, only the warmth from the hot-water pipes kept him awake.

The Russian wolves, the Arctic wolves, and Esquimaux dogs were beautifully wrapped up in their winter furs, and seemed to ask to be let out for a good gallop in the snow. At night, when the wind rattles through the trees, and the winter storm breaks over London, these wolves accompany the noise of the elements with far-sounding and terrible howlings. A single wolf is naturally a coward. The story goes that into a pitfall once tumbled a woman, a fox, and a wolf. When all three were taken out uninjured, the wolf was found the most frightened of the three. In packs, however, wolves are terrible fellows. They are particularly fond of donkeys, particularly white donkeys.

The foxes were quite lively and active. It has been observed that, however severe the cold, foxes prefer to be out, and not to lie up. When a fox coils himself up to sleep he uses his brush as a respirator. The most wonderful fox ever brought to the Gardens is the gigantic fox from Buenos Ayres; he is nearly as big as a rough Scotch deerhound. He was obliging enough to open his mouth, put his ears back, and snarl; his beautiful set of teeth are very foxlike. The coati monde seemed as fussy and busy as ever; he was routing with his long flexible nose among the straw, as though he had just lost something, and could not spare a moment to speak to you till he had found it. Mr. Coati is a regular jack-of-all-trades; he can run, he can climb, he can dig. This gentleman is sure to get his living anywhere.

Close to the coati's cage are the two little specimens of Norwegian lynx, who seemed to be quite at home in the frost and snow. These were taken when kittens as big as guinea pigs from the mother lynx's nest by a gallant major when in Norway, who, fearful of the wrath of Madam Puss when finding herself childless, beat a precipitate retreat with the lynx kittens in his pockets. These kitten lynxes are very tame, and play with their keeper. They are most powerful little brutes, and have paws like boxing-gloves, only that inside of their boxing-gloves lie concealed in sheaths those terribly cruel talons.

Among land animals the wild boar seemed the most independent of wet and cold. This fine old beast appeared to be in first-class order, and grunted recognition. In his native state he lives in large forests, and he avoids any place that denotes the presence of man. He lives upon roots, grapes, acorns, young rabbits, eggs (when he can get them), and whatever he can pick up. In the day he lives in thick bushes; at night he comes out to feed. His coat is most wonderfully adapted for his mode of life. Anybody who wants to know what is the composition of his coat need only examine their hair-brushes, which are formed of the crests of wild or semi-wild boars from Russia. The wild boar has a most expres-

sive eye, in which cleverness, great cunning, and self-dependence can be read by the physiognomist.

The beavers have received the loppings of many trees. These ingenious architects will soon utilize these trees, and it will be interesting to watch what sort of a structure they intend to build with them. The beaver keeps a little hole in his pond free from ice by continuously moving about through it. It appears that the beaver finds that he is warmer in the water than out of it; he even takes his dinner in it. A bit of carrot was to be observed bobbing about at the top of the water, and by the side of it a little black object. This object was the beaver's nose, just visible at the top of the water, while he was gnawing the carrot.

A proof that to amphibious animals the water is warmer than the air on such a day as that of my visit, is, I think, that the seals did not like to come out of the pond; they seemed to prefer to stay always in the water. The seal-pond was completely covered with pieces of broken ice, but it was not frozen over. The undulations of the broken ice, caused by the diving of the seals below it, had a pretty effect. These seals are not the hair seal, but the fur seal, as used for ladies' coats. The ladies have made the fur fashionable; so much the worse for the seals and the ladies' husbands. The emus did not seem to mind the cold; neither did the pheasants from cold climates, especially the Northern Himalayan. The peacock, with his back covered with snow, presented a curious appearance.

The change from the cutting snowstorm into the lion-house was very marked. For some reason or other the lions seemed very much struck with the appearance of the writer. I could not make it out till I discovered the snow had accumulated over my hat and coat, so that the lions probably thought that some new and curious animal had come to visit them. They had probably never seen a snow-covered human being before. This admirably-arranged lion-house has, without doubt, been a saving of the lives of many of these magnificent carnivora. At this period of the year the most noticeable of them is the hairy tiger. This tiger lives in cold and snow districts, and has a much longer and more wool-like coat than the tigers from the hot districts of India.

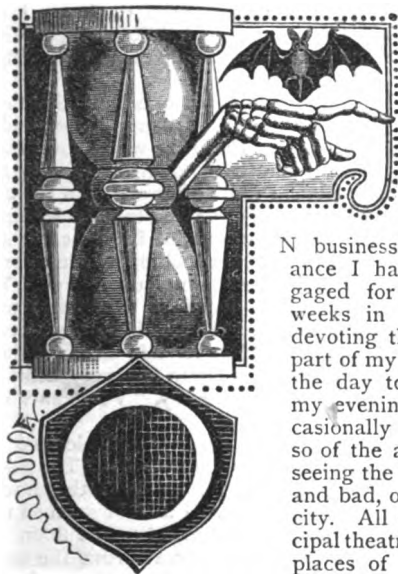
The most unhappy things appeared to be the snakes. They were mostly coiled up under their blankets. The only snake at all lively was the poisonous cobra-like snake, the *ophiophagus elaps*. This fellow eats snakes, and snakes only. Common English snakes are his favourite fare; these just now are excessively scarce, and worth 2s. each. The snake-eater, however, did not go without his dinner, as projecting from his mouth could be seen the tail of a young boa-constrictor, which was good enough to die in order to provide his relation with a meal. The monkeys seemed very happy in their comfortable house, where every care was taken of them; but these are bad times for monkeys as well as men. The temperature seemed to have been well studied, and adapted to the nature and for the well-being of the different animals in this most valuable and well-cared-for collection.

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The Agate Cross.

CHAPTER I.



N business of importance I had been engaged for about two weeks in New York, devoting the principal part of my time during the day to work, but my evenings, and occasionally an hour or so of the afternoon, to seeing the sights, good and bad, of that great city. All of the principal theatres and other places of amusement, all the finest buildings,

Central Park, and (shall I say it?) the most gorgeous gambling-houses, billiard-rooms, &c., had been visited by me. Broadway in its every-day business garb, and Broadway in its brilliant evening costume, with the starry radiance of gas-jets from the halls of pleasure shining above it like a tiara of diamonds on the brow of a belle, had each been the object of my attention, and afforded me a world of pleasure.

My business in New York was about finished, and I had made my arrangements to start by Saturday's steamer for home—and, determining to devote the intervening three days to pleasure, had already made an engagement with a friend to witness a billiard match that evening. Having myself just learned to handle a cue with a slight modicum of dexterity, I (as is natural, I believe, to a novice) considered myself a judge of good playing, and expected to derive considerable pleasure in witnessing the trial between artists in the game.

Fortifying ourselves for the expected excitement with a good dinner, we proceeded to the billiard-room, on the upper part of Broadway. I was hardly pleased with the arrangement of the place, for I am always adverse to descending into the bowels of the earth; but when I had descended the steps and reached the room, which was some distance back,

I had no fault to find. It was elegantly fitted up, and contained two fine, handsome billiard-tables.

We took our seats, and watched the artistic game through, and, after discussing its merits, were just going to leave, when my friend Charlie noticed several persons going through a door at the end of the room, and impulsively proposed finding out what was going on in there. I agreed, and with an air of assurance we opened the door, walked in, and discovered it to be a gambling-room, of which the billiard-room outside was the respectable shell for this rotten kernel within.

It was smaller than the billiard-room, but large enough for a deal of mischief to be transacted in. We did not remain there long, for we did not like the aspect of the occupants, only stopping a few moments to notice the style of game in progress, and then left the place entirely. Charlie walked with me as far as the hotel, and then we parted.

When in my room I discovered I had lost my gloves, or left them in the saloon, and as they were fur-lined and trimmed, I considered them worth the trouble, and determined to step in and get them the next morning. All the next day, however, I was kept busy by the unaccountable absence of one of my packages of goods, and it was not until the morning after, when the package was found and shipped that in passing up Broadway the gloves returned to my mind, and I proceeded to the saloon.

I did not much expect, after that lapse of time, to recover them, and it was possibly quite as much curiosity to see the place by daylight as anything else that took me down the steps and into the saloon. There were only a few in the lunch-room as I entered, and they seemed to be in an excited and eager discussion about something, so much so, that I passed unnoticed, and entered the billiard-room.

Faugh! what a smell of stale tobacco and liquor, and what a dirty, disorderly place! Confusion and riot seemed to have reigned there. Chairs were upset, the floor strewn with fragments of broken glass, and, altogether, a more disgusting change from its gaslight brilliancy could scarcely be imagined.

My gloves were not there, and, without pausing for thought, I passed to the inner room, and, as I stepped over the threshold, placed my foot on something hard. I stooped and picked it up, and, as it was too dark to see what it was, I lightly dropped it into my outside pocket until my return to the billiard-room, and stepping forward, as my eyes became accustomed to the twilight, and daylight streamed through the open door I had left, I distinguished a terrible something stretched upon the long table.

With an exclamation of horror, I started back, as I recognized it to be the ghastly corpse of a man,

with a yawning knife-wound in his throat, from which the blood had settled upon the table, and another similar wound in the region of the heart. Petrified, I gazed upon it as though the victim of a terrible nightmare, imprinting indelibly on my memory the fearful sight. The next moment the sound of feet hurrying towards me roused me to a sense of my own danger; and, with a bound, I cleared the space between me and the open door, and, closing it softly, had only time to pretend to be searching among the cushioned side seats, when a man entered.

Keeping my back to the new-comer until he had almost reached me, I thus had a short time to recover my self-control, and turned towards him. He was a dangerous-looking person. His savage black eyes had no mercy in them, and I felt the necessity of a desperate effort at concealment; so, with a light laugh, which sounded frightful to myself, I said, in answer to his uncivil question of what I wanted—

“Why, I was so green as to think I might find my gloves again. I was here night fore last at your great billiard match, and I felt sure I left them somewhere hereabout. You haven’t seen nothin’ of them, have you?”

I looked up at him with the simplest face I could assume. How I blest my stars then, for what had often mortified me before, that I was, as Charlie and others said, “the greenest-looking specimen for one that had brains.” The man looked at me with a shrewd, suspicious face, and once he reached out his hand a little towards me in a way that made me shiver; for the thought crossed my mind that he had a weapon in his sleeve, and also that I had entered the place alone, and was unarmed. With my nerves strung for the emergency, I endured his gaze without flinching, and coolly ejected the tobacco saliva from my mouth, as I turned and walked with desperate calmness out of the room; but I keenly listened to his footfall coming after mine, to detect if it drew nearer.

I could not quite endure to the end. I felt that if I did not once more face him, and see that all was right, that when within reach of the door I should not be able to restrain the eager impulse to spring through it, and thus betray my knowledge of what was behind me. To have done that would, I knew, be death to me, and I was quite sure, as it was, that I would be carefully watched during the remainder of my short stay in the city.

I turned again to the man, to speak I hardly knew what; but with a gruff “Good day” he turned on his heel, passed again through the room we had just left, and I heard the clicking of a door-key at the other end immediately after. I did not, you may suppose, await his return, but briskly left the place; and it was with a gasping sigh of relief that I emerged into the open air, and hastened to my room at the hotel to consider what I should do in the matter.

I had not time to do much, for the vessel sailed in a few hours. I could write to the chief of the police all about the circumstances, state where the body lay, urge expedition, and leave the rest in his hands. I did so, put the letter in the hotel post-box, and, a little easier in my mind, took my satchel in

hand, and wended my way down to the steamer. Here I locked myself into my state-room, and endeavoured to take a little rest before dinner. But I could not. In taking off my overcoat, something from the pocket of it fell to the floor with a ringing sound, and I suddenly remembered the article I had picked up near where the corpse lay. I now discovered it to be the handle of a slender dirk, broken off short at the blade. Two initials were on it, A. W., and it was stained with what I knew to be human blood. Vividly again rose before me the face and form of the murdered man.

Every little minutia stood out boldly before my excited mind’s eye. I remembered distinctly his various articles of dress, peculiarities of style, &c.—things to which I had hitherto given no thought, and which I had seen unconsciously.

But I particularly remembered one little circumstance, which, even in the midst of my horror, had impressed me peculiarly. From the wound over his heart, which evidently mostly bled inwardly, only a slender red line of blood ran downward in a curve, and settled in a little pool upon the table. In this pool, upright and steady, supported by the chain it depended from, was a peculiar-looking agate cross. It was of an odd shape, surmounted with gold, a single ruby in the centre, which, as the sunbeams from the open door struck it, looked like a fiery red eye, the deadly witness of the terrible deed; while the position of the cross itself, in the very heart’s blood of the victim, seemed to say, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.”

My thoughts were becoming too horrible, and I endeavoured to shake them off, but in vain. The pale face, staring eye, and ghastly wound in the throat returned to me every moment. I almost seemed to hear the drip, drip, drip of the blood to the floor.

I could not endure it, and I arose from the bed upon which I had thrown myself, and, from sheer restlessness, drew my diary from my pocket, and wrote an account of what had passed, with dates, descriptions, situations, &c., as accurate as possible. Then, upon the impulse of the moment, I attempted a rude sketch of the murdered man, as he lay upon the table, and of the cross in its singular position. Upon the opposite page I drew a representation of the man who had followed me into the room, and whom I unaccountably looked upon as the assassin.

I am considered a somewhat skilful draughtsman, and the resemblance in either case, although perhaps not artistic, was such as to make me desire never to see those pages again; so, with a couple of postage stamps, I sealed over the edges of the leaves, and put the book, with the dirk-handle, at the bottom of my trunk.

We had a pleasant, prosperous journey, and in the confusion consequent upon our arrival, the unpacking of so much merchandise, and the happy reunion with my loved ones and friends, the affair slowly and gradually slept in my memory.

CHAPTER II.

I FOUND that Divine Providence had kept all my dear ones from harm during my absence. Prosperity had attended my business, and all had

been well—ah! I mistake. I said all, but I should have made one exception, which we, in the absence of a genuine calamity, were pleased to consider a great misfortune. My little Alice's governess, whom we all regarded very highly, was taken ill, and, one week prior to my return, obliged to give up teaching. We all sincerely regretted her loss, but it could not be avoided, so we were forced to seek another. We sought among the advertisements; we ourselves advertised; we inquired diligently among our acquaintances, but could find no one who seemed suited to take Miss Munson's place. My wife was almost in despair, and disposed to think that fate had served her hard in depriving her of our friend just at this time.

A month passed away, and she sat sewing on a little cap (too big for a doll), in her sewing-room, one gloomy morning, her seamstress the recipient of all her trouble in getting a governess, when the door-bell rang, and presently the housemaid announced a lady in the parlour to see the missis. Here was another trial, for my lady, being out of sorts, and ailing, considered everything a trial. "To have to leave her embroidery and go downstairs was too bad. Besides, she was not dressed to receive visitors, and did not know whether it was worth while to change her dress or not. She wished Jane had told her who it was. Well, she supposed she might as well go first as last." So the cap was tossed into the basket, a clean handkerchief selected, and madame descended. When I returned home to dinner in the evening, I was met with smiles, and an—

"Oh, Robert, I have at last got a governess for Alice, and *such* a nice one! She is a perfect lady, but so sad, and—and—"

I interrupted her with a hearty laugh and a kiss, and inquired where she had run across this paragon, and if she thought she could teach any better for being "*so* sad, and—and—"

"Well, but now, Robert, stop teasing, and be sensible. I declare, I won't say another word about her, but leave you to judge for yourself. She is coming here at six o'clock to see you."

"All right, Mary. And now let us have supper, for I am afraid I shall be too severe to her sad ladyship if I see her while in my present hungry state."

At six o'clock she came. We had just finished dinner, and, with my evening paper and slippers, I was just enjoying my—ahem—toothpick (I don't smoke), when the girl announced, "Mrs. Whitlock."

"She is a widow, then," I said to myself, as I arose and went to the parlour.

Seated in one of the easy-chairs was the lady, who arose as I went forward to greet her. I commented silently as we conversed. Not above medium height, of a lithe, graceful figure, and with a complexion like pure Parian marble. Not a shade of colour tinged her cheeks, and but lightly her lips, yet she was perfectly healthy-looking. She had large, full, dark eyes, and wavy hair which fell low on her forehead but away at the temples; small, white, even teeth, and dimples at the corners of her mouth when she smiled, which was seldom; but, oh! "*so* sad," as my wife had said, when serious. I found her very intelligent, and had no doubt of her ability to teach

little Alice; but I hesitated a moment about engaging her, having always wished our little maid to have cheerful, happy companionship. I resolutely banished the thought, however, as unkind, and hoped that, as probably misfortune had produced the look, our happy home and friendly feeling toward her would, after a time, banish it. So the next day she entered our house, and became one of the family.

As the weeks went on, Alice became very fond of her; my wife considered herself fortunate in securing so great a prize, and I, busy among bales and bundles down town, thought little about it, except that I noticed that as time wore on, instead of growing more cheerful, she seemed to me to become more vexatiously gloomy. I remarked the same to my wife; but she repelled the idea with spirit, and declared that it was all my imagination.

"Mrs. Whitlock was a jewel of the first water. She had seen a deal of trouble, and, of course, could not be gay immediately; but she was always gentle and patient, and so persevering. In fact," Mary continued, in a lower tone, "I should not like to be the one to do her an injury, for, good as she is, I think, if her anger was once aroused, she would be just as persevering and patient in accomplishing her revenge as she is in everything else."

I dropped the question, for if Mary was satisfied, of course I might be, for she had a far better opportunity of studying and knowing her character than I had.

A few weeks after the above remarks, we had a little social tea party. Only about a dozen in all, and all of them very old friends. Business was dull at that time, and I came home early in the afternoon and had a good social chat with our friends. After supper almost everything possible was discussed, jokes laughed at, anecdotes related; and, at last, by imperceptible degrees, we got talking about my last season's trip.

For the first time I related the sight I had seen in the gambling-saloon, and my own danger. My wife turned white, while a visible shudder went through the listeners. Why I had never before spoken of it was beyond my explanation, except that I could not bear to recall the shock I had received. For a little while the conversation was all about horrible incidents and accidents, and then, as by a sort of tacit common consent, we went back to the gay and lively, forgetting the unpleasant as speedily as possible.

My wife, however, did not regain her colour, and glancing casually at Mrs. Whitlock, I saw her turning the pages of a book of engravings, upside down, with compressed lips and a scarlet spot on either cheek; while her eyes, as she looked up, were no longer sad, but hard and glittering. I wondered at the change, and, finding she was observed, she closed the book, left the room, and only returned as the company were bidding us good-night. As we returned to the parlour, Mary gave vent to her excited feelings by clutching me tightly, and exclaiming—

"Oh, Rob, you never shall go to that dreadful New York again!"

I laughed, and soothed her to the best of my ability; but she pressed me with questions until every little incident was extorted, even to my act

in attempting the portraits. I was foolish to tell that, for I knew, or might guess, what would follow.

"But, Rob, dear, where is the drawing you made of them? Let me see them—do!"

"Not for worlds, Mary," said I, nervously. "I never want those leaves opened again to recall my horror. As soon as I reached home I locked the book in the secretaire down-stairs, and have never touched it since. Don't ask me to do so now, for I cannot. I should have burned it long ago, but for that feeling of repugnance."

We were all silent for a few moments, and I felt Mrs. Whitlock's eyes again like coals of fire glowing upon me; and, feeling uneasy under her gaze, I arose and retired to my room, where I was soon abed and sound asleep. Once during the night I aroused to a dreamy half-consciousness, beset with a sort of horror. I thought I was again in the billiard-room on Broadway, and the dead man had moved. I seemed to hear his garments rustle; but, with half-awakened sense, I argued the thought away.

"Dead men don't move. That is the proprietor going back into the other room. He has locked the door of the room where the corpse is. I heard it click."

At this point I awakened fully, and with sudden thought sat upright in bed. Had I really heard the door click, or only dreamed it? I listened intently, while I endeavoured to peer through the darkness. Quiet, perfect quiet, reigned, and after a few moments I again lay down. It was only a dream—and was I always to be subject to a renewal of that fearful scene? I was vexed with myself for my pusillanimity, and shut my eyes, much as a naughty child threatened with punishment would do, and went to sleep again.

It was after our usual hour when we arose the next morning, and as we entered the breakfast-room I was surprised at seeing nothing of either Mrs. Whitlock or Alice. Summoning the maid, we sent her up to call them, but she quickly returned with dilated eyes.

"Mrs. Whitlock is not there, ma'am, and Miss Alice is sitting up in bed dressing her doll. I found this letter on the dressing-table, so I brought it down."

She handed me the letter, and lingered around to gather news; but I dismissed her to attend Alice, and, breaking the seal, read aloud—

"SIR—I am committing an act which you may consider unpardonable, but which an irresistible fate calls upon me to do. You have all been kind friends to me, and I am very, very grateful to you for it. I cannot make up my mind to lose your good opinion, even through a misunderstanding; therefore I am going to tell you unreservedly the sad reason of my unceremonious departure. And, to do so, I must go back a little, to the time before I knew you. I was the happy wife of George Whitlock up to one year ago. Then he left me to visit New York, as you did, on business, expecting to be gone not longer than two months at the utmost; but—he never returned. Vainly have I watched and waited for tidings of him, until, last night—for I never doubted

his truth nor his love for me—your adventure and description of the murdered person awakened a sickening dread in my mind. My husband wore such a cross as you described, and I did not think he could be tempted to part with it. It was an heirloom in the family, and said to possess the mysterious power of criminating the assassin should the wearer be foully dealt with. I could not rest. I must see and satisfy myself with the pictures in your memorandum. I waited until all was perfectly silent about the house, and then quietly crossed the hall to your room. I had the good fortune to find the door unlocked; so I entered, and felt my way cautiously to where your clothes lay. I carefully abstracted your keys, and, making my way downstairs, struck a light, and searched the secretaire. You see I hide nothing. After a short time, I found the memorandum with the leaves bound together. These I quickly tore apart with trembling hands, and found, as my heart had before told me, that the victim was indeed my beloved husband. I think I must have fainted, for I was unconscious of time from that moment, until the clock striking two aroused me to my work. I now go to avenge him, for I recognized in the other face *his unsuccessful rival for my hand, his enemy and murderer, and his cousin*. Forgive me that I take with me the important leaves of your memorandum and the dirk handle. I need them in my revenge. Adieu. May you be blessed for the inspiration that has given this valuable testimony to me, and for all your kindness to the unfortunate—

"JULIE WHITLOCK.

"P.S.—Do not distress your kind hearts fearing I want, for I am wealthy. I did not become your child's governess from need of money, but in the hope of hearing something of my lost one through one who was in New York at the same time, and returned in the same boat that George was to have returned in. I have done so, alas! But the information has only made my misery more assured. I live but to avenge my husband."

"J. W."

In blank amazement we stared in each other's faces. My wife first recovered herself, and, with a sob, said—

"Poor, poor Mrs. Whitlock—how shocking!" But I arose silently from the table, and left the house. It was too earnest a subject to be commented upon, and I hastened to the privacy of my office to consider what best could be done to aid the unhappy widow.

Greatly I feared the danger which I knew she would encounter, alone in that great city, with such a purpose, and I could not content myself to leave her unaided or unadvised. I rang my bell, and sent for my partner, to confer with him. He had been one of our party the evening before, and had heard my story. I now related to him the sequel to it, and expressed my fears for Mrs. Whitlock's safety.

For an hour we sat talking and planning. No boat was to leave until the next afternoon, and we decided to try and find her, and, if possible, prevail upon her not to risk herself amid so much wickedness—to offer our willing services to act as her agents in bringing the crime to light and avenging

her husband's cruel death. We separated for that purpose, but met again in the evening with disconsolate faces, having been unable to discern the least trace of her. We had visited the several vessels about starting for the North, but no such person had taken passage in any of them. We had inquired for her at every place where we had thought it possible for her to be known, but with no success; and disheartened, we again met to discuss proceedings.

For a week we continued our inquiries, and then reluctantly gave it up. We could hear nothing whatever, nor discover the slightest trace of her. Like a meteor, she had vanished suddenly and completely from the horizon of our home.

Perch Fishing in Winter.

THE perch, like the chub, on which some notes recently occurred in these columns, gives excellent sport to the angler during the winter months, and it is in January and February that, generally speaking, the greatest number and the finest specimens of the race are taken. Just before the setting in of the last frost, the reports from the Chertsey, Windsor, Maidenhead, and other Thames districts, as well as from other parts of the kingdom, showed that the perch were "well on," many large creels and heavy fish having been recorded; and now that the frost again seems to have given way, similar reports will probably soon come to hand, provided that we do not have sufficient rain to increase the volume of water in the Thames and other rivers. Indeed, just after a frost, which has the effect of sharpening the appetites of the fish, and when rivers begin to fall and the water is clearing, perch are most successfully angled for.

Like the chub, too, the perch is a very accommodating fish, for he can be taken with a great variety of baits, and during all seasons of the year in which, either legally or according to the unwritten law of angling sport, he may be captured. He will not, indeed, take a natural or artificial fly in the summer months, like the chub, it being an exceptional thing for him to rise to this lure at all; but he is taken all through the earlier part of the season by anglers, whether specially seeking him as their quarry, or intent on roach, dace, barbel, and gudgeon fishing; in fact, it is almost true that perch may be taken anywhen, anyhow, and anywhere, so plentifully is the fish distributed among our waters. Still, it is in the winter that perch fishing is at its best.

The perch is one of the most interesting and handsome of our British fresh-water fish. He belongs to the order of the *Acanthopterygii*, or "spinous finned" fish, as more than one ichthyologically unscientific angler has learnt by handling him unwarily, a hedgehog being almost as easy of manipulation as a lively perch. *Percida* is the "family" name, and a very large and terrible family it is, distributed almost all over the world, and containing, according to Cuvier, more than five hundred species, of which, however, but about a dozen are found in British salt and fresh water. The most dangerous members are the "stinging weaver" or "sea dragon," the "labrax" or "sea wolf," and the "sky gazer" of the Mediterranean, whose form is as hideous as

his ichthyological title, *Uranoscopus hemerocetus*, is sesquipetalian.

The common perch—*Perca fluviatilis*—and the ruff or pope—*Perca fluviatilis minor*—are the fresh-water representatives of the *Percida* family in this country, and they have the distinguishing feature of a second dorsal fin, and serrated or spinous gill-flaps, which can inflict as painful an injury on the incautious as the first spinous fin on the back. The old Saxons represented one of their gods standing with naked feet on the back of a perch, "as an emblem of patience in adversity and constancy in trial." Our perch is a dangerous customer in every way, and for his size as great a terror to the scaly tribes as the voracious jack himself. This is why, perhaps, the old author of "The Haven of Health" says that the "perch" is so called "by a figure of antiphrasis—*quia, nulli piscium parcat.*" It is hardly necessary to say that this fancy etymology will not stand. We find the word in different languages: in French it is *perche*, and in Latin, Spanish, and Italian *perca*; and it must be taken to be derived from the Greek adjective *perkos*, which signifies some dark colour, such as that of ripening grapes or olives.

The perch, then, takes his title from the dark sable bands which bar his back and sides. However, to call him merely the "dark" or "dusky" fish must strike many persons as but a feeble attempt at classification. He is deserving of a better name, and our Anglo-Saxon forefathers gave him one—to wit, bears (Dutch *baars*, German *barsch*), meaning, of course, the bar or barred fish. This certainly indicates the speciality of his marking, though it does not in any way suggest his great beauty. He may, indeed, be said to have a somewhat unpleasant cast of countenance, caused probably by the downward cut of his lips, and his eyes have a wicked look about them; still, he is both a handsome and beautiful fish. He is resplendent with colours, both in harmony and contrast. The dark transverse bars zebra-wise, striping his pale-shaded green body, the bright vermilion of his anal and caudal fins, the golden irides of his eyes, and his white belly, make him a perfect picture, which rightly elicited the admiration of Pope, who calls him—

"The bright-eyed perch, with fins of Tyrian dye,"

and, long before, led Ausonius to hail him as the "prince of the prickly cohort" and the "illustrious perch."

There are no prettier objects to the fish-admiring eye than schools of perch. As you look down upon them in clear water—in Slapton Lea, for instance, or in Windermere, where they are to be seen in countless hosts, or even in the Thames—the greater part of their bodies seem to be transparent, the dark bars causing the illusion; while, as a specimen fish in an aquarium, there is nothing so charmingly pretty and fascinating as a small perch, nor any whose movements are more interesting. It is a sad fact that as perch pass on into years they lose much of their beauty of form and colour. But this is the way, more or less, of all flesh as well as fish.

To the ichthyologist the perch has attractions far above most of the other denizens of our fresh waters;

and it would require disproportionate space even to enumerate the several characteristics which distinguish this fish in a natural history point of view. One or two, however, may be mentioned. Our perch, like all others of the *Percide* family, opens its mouth widely when taken out of the water, and dies with open gills. When hungry he gapes most, and appears at times "to bring his stomach up into his mouth as an angry camel is said to do." This was noticed by the ancients; and Galen observes that "as famished persons stretch forth their hands to snatch at victuals, so the stomach of this fish protrudes the gullet for the same purpose." The learned Dr. Badham, in his "Fish Tattle," descants on this peculiarity of the fish; but it is just possible that the matter requires some further investigation.

The perch is credited also with being bi-sexual, and most anglers must have noticed the fact that nineteen out of twenty perch taken when they are in spawn are females, as evidenced by the hard roe. With the exception of the eel—if, indeed, this nondescript creature is to be classed among fish—the perch evidences greater vitality and tenacity of life than almost any other fish. It will live nearly as long as a carp in wet moss or grass, and will show signs of life—though some may say these are only "muscular contraction"—for a very considerable time after it has been stunned by a blow on the head, and actually scaled, and its entrails taken out.

Of all foreign perch, the most peculiar is the *Anabas scandens*, or "tree-climbing" perch, which is fully described by Sir Emerson Tennent in his book on Ceylon. This fish actually scales trees, by the action of the ventral fins, in order to catch the insects among the branches; and there are not a few naturalists who would be glad to learn from modern evolutionists how it came to pass that a fish took such an extraordinary fancy, and acquired the power of putting it into execution.

The English perch, as before intimated, is very widely distributed throughout the kingdom, perhaps more widely than any other British fish—hardly a river or a bit of stagnant water being without it. It does not usually attain any great size. Some large fish, however, are on record—for instance, a 9 lbs. fish taken from the Serpentine, mentioned by Yarell; but the credibility of his account is questioned. Pennant mentions one of 8 lbs.; and, among the moderns, Mr. Frank Buckland speaks of perch of 5 lbs. and 6 lbs. as having been caught; whilst on the wall of the bar-parlour at the hotel on Slapton Lea, a six-pounder, taken in water hard by, is delineated in coloured chalks.

As a rule, perch run small with us, and grow but slowly, especially in stagnant waters. A pound fish is a fair one, but two-pounders are often taken. Three-pounders are scarce indeed, and a four-pound fish may be regarded as a veritable piscatorial trophy. Above this weight there are probably very few perch in the United Kingdom. The Kennet is, perhaps, the best perch water in England, at least for fish of good size; but the Thames is by no means to be despised, though during the last two seasons the fish have not shown up particularly well. Virginia Water holds large fish, and so does the lake at Blenheim.

It is very possible that many large pieces of water

in private grounds, such as that just named, contain better perch than is generally suspected, as it is not often that such waters get fairly and perseveringly tried for this fish. For large numbers of perch, Slapton Lea and Windermere stand ahead of most other fishing grounds. The perch has the credit of being a very voracious fish. The writer of a complimentary ode to Izaak Walton speaks of him as

"The greedy perch, bold-biting fool,"

thus crediting him with folly as well as greediness.

This is certainly the true character of small-sized perch, which suffer from want of a due supply of food in stagnant water of limited extent, where they may be easily taken at almost any time with the rudest of tackle; and it is true, also, to a great extent, of small perch anywhere. All perch, too, when hungry, are more or less "greedy" and "bold-biting"—as, indeed, are many other fish; but it is a great mistake to suppose that fair-sized and large perch, especially in waters like the Thames or Kennet, where they are much fished for and have become highly educated, are always greedy and "bold-biting," so that they can be easily captured. In such waters they are often very capricious, and have their "ons" and "offs"—especially the latter—like other fish.

Voracious indeed are large perch when "on," and they will often seize a bait intended for a jack five times their weight, calculating, it would seem, rather by the enormous size of their mouths than by any other consideration; but the larger perch are shy and fastidious fish as a rule, and Mr. Rolfe's well-known picture, "The Committee of Taste," representing a school of perch round the baited hooks suspended at intervals on the line—one wearing an air of inquisitiveness, another of suspicion, and a third of disgust and contempt of the proffered lure—very expressively delineates this shyness and fastidiousness. Practical fishermen also well know by experience that even when perch are fairly "on," they are often very particular as to what bait they will take, accepting freely one day what they will not look at on another; and that this change in their taste will come about suddenly within a few hours.

A remarkable instance of this occurred lately on the Thames. The perch had been feeding freely for some days in the month of February, the minnows being the only bait in favour. The minnow was, therefore, first tried on the day in question, but it was of no avail; and, consequently, the tail of a lob-worm was added on another hook. This had the desired effect: the fish came to hand, and by the end of the day there were thirty-one perch in the punt, among which were two of 2½ lbs. each, and several pounders and three-quarter pounders—as pretty a dish of fish, after its kind, as an angler need wish to see. Not a single fish was taken with the minnow; and two gentlemen in another punt, who fished in the same district on the same day, and perseveringly worked the minnow from morning till night, had a complete blank.

As a sporting fish the perch does not now stand in very high repute. Izaak Walton says that he is "valiant to defend himself;" but this is hardly the

character of a modern perch, and he does not show nearly as good a fight as a barbel, roach, dace, or even the tiny gudgeon, weight for weight. Like jack, too, the larger perch get the more feeble, and short is the struggle they maintain against capture. However, there are no fish which the ordinary angler delights more to catch than the perch.

The methods of fishing for perch are various. He can be taken by spinning a real or artificial minnow, a practice much in vogue in lakes such as Slapton Lea, but not much resorted to in large rivers; by live-baiting with a minnow, with or without the use of a float; and by "paternostering" with minnow or worm, or with both. In some waters—Virginia Water, for instance—the "leger" may often be used with advantage, the tackle being light, and almost any kind of worms employed for bait.

By the way, though, in the summer months the odoriferous and high-flavoured brandling seems most in favour with perch—perhaps on the same principle that curry commends itself to English taste in hot weather in India—while the less spicy invertebrates are taken more freely in the winter. In winter fishing for perch the paternoster is most in vogue; but a far more interesting and artistic, and withal more deadly, method, generally speaking, is the use of "Nottingham tackle," very much after the style mentioned in a recent article on Chub Fishing.

Perhaps, however, taking one day with another, in the winter months there are more good perch killed by simple bottom or float fishing, with the tail of a lobworm, in moderately deep holes where there is a gentle back eddy, particularly when the waters are subsiding after a flood. The bait should always be well on the bottom, and even just tripping or dragging. But, whatever be the method of fishing employed, there is nothing to be gained by experimenting with other baits than worms or minnows.

There are two or three good rules for the perch angler to observe in winter fishing for large perch. Let the tackle be as fine as possible, and the baits well selected and adjusted; for large perch are wary and particular. As large perch, too, are generally delicate (not greedy or bold) biters, give them time; or, in other words, they should not be struck in too great a hurry. And, further, they should not be struck too sharply, or played too roughly, as they are fish with very tender mouths, and thus liable to break away. "Lift" them rather than "strike."

It is a good plan, when particular holes or gentle swims have been determined on for operation against the perch, with worms as bait, to ground-bait them beforehand for a few days successively; but the worms should be thrown in sparingly, so that the fish may not have too much of a good thing. A few broken pieces should also be thrown in from time to time during the fishing. It is well, if possible, to have two or three "pitches" to work in a day's fishing, so that the angler can change from one to the other as occasion may require. After two or three fish have been pricked, or have broken away after being hooked, their companions are very apt to get shy and cease biting, even if they do not leave the spot altogether. A rest, therefore, given

to the spot does good, for probably in an hour or two the fish will have quieted down again.

A few words, in conclusion, as to the culinary merits of *Perca fluviatilis*. The perch fairly stands at the head of all coarse fish, gudgeon excepted, gastronomically. As the chub is the worst of this class, so is the perch the best—i.e., a river and not a pond perch. Perhaps this is one reason why he is such a favourite fish with anglers; for, naturally enough, all sportsmen are pleased with the idea that their quarry can be utilized. Men do not hunt, shoot, or fish primarily "for the pot;" but to every sportsman it is more pleasant to carry home something which can be eaten than that which cannot.

The perch is hymned by Ausonius as *delicious mensarum*, "the gourmand's delight;" and the poet, as translated, goes on to say—

"Tho' river-fed,
No daintier dish in ocean's pastures bred
Swims thy compeer."

The faculty in the middle ages considered perch the invalid's fish *par excellence*. Walton commends him, and cites a proverb, which says, "More wholesome than a perch of Rhine." Perch may be cooked in almost as many ways as French chefs deal with eggs. On the Continent they are generally stewed and eaten with some acid sauce. We boil, broil, bake, and fry them. Any way they are good eating; but those interested in the cookery of fresh-water fish may take it that a perch should be broiled in his jacket—i.e., with the scales on his skin. When done he may be laid open, and butter, pepper, and a little lemon applied, as the cookery book says, "to taste." Or he may be broiled, laid open in the "spread-eagle" style, but still unscaled.

Perch vary considerably, according to the water from which they are taken. Those of the pond are generally "pondy," but many large pieces of water produce fine-flavoured fish—notably Virginia Water. No man of taste, again, need despise Hampshire, Avon, and Kennet perch; and the same may be said of some of the East Anglian Broads. Generations ago, Breedon perch had a good name. But there are, after all, no better perch than those which the Thames produces in winter; and the time is at hand for Thames anglers to be looking after them.

THE Venezuela Government sent over to the Paris Exhibition, among the exhibits in their department, a number of bottles containing "cow-tree milk," or juice of the *Brosimum glactodendron* of tropical America. M. Boussingault has made a more complete analysis of the milk than has hitherto been possible. This milk, he remarks, approaches cow's milk in its composition in so far that it contains fatty constituents, saccharine matter, casein, and phosphate. But the relative proportion of these constituents differs widely. The total of solid constituents is three times as large as those of cow's milk, and this vegetable milk would be better compared with cream. Butter presents almost the same conditions as are present in the waxy constituent in cow-tree milk. The solid constituents are almost identical. This analogy explains the nutritive properties of this milk, or rather vegetable cream.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Ranting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XX.—"IT WASNA' FOR MY AIN SAKE."

"SO you are bent on behaving like a lunatic, eh, Frank? Well, you must do as you think best. Vaughan, I suppose, is of the same mind?"

"Yes, general. We are only waiting for night."

"And you really will risk your lives on the faith of what that boy said? It is more likely than not that it is a trap of his own invention—but I see it's of no use to try and dissuade you. I am sorry to lose you, as you have been very useful to me, both of you. Your friend seems to be a fine, brave fellow, with a good deal of stuff in him."

Morley made no reply.

"It's well for me," continued the general, "that Captain Smith is better, and able to take command of his company again, though he has not half the pluck poor O'Hara had, or Vaughan. By the by, Frank, I have found out the meaning of this sudden quiet, and stoppage of the attacks on the gate."

"What is it?"

"That scoundrel, Rao, who was evidently at the bottom of a good deal of the planning and plotting, has suddenly left Bagra."

"Has he?" said Morley, becoming interested.

"What for, in the name of all that's wonderful?"

"That I cannot tell you, but it's a very fortunate thing for me."

"I must go, general. Look, the sun is already low. Many, many thanks for all your kindness and sympathy. It seems mean to leave you now that you are rather driven into a corner, but four would make little difference."

"Four! Then you are going to take that native lad with you?"

"Yes. He knows the place, and will guide us down the least frequented streets. You see, we know nothing of the town, and at night we should be sure to lose ourselves. Good-bye, I must be off."

"Good-bye, my lad. Heaven bless you!"

The chances of the young men getting safely away from the town were so vague that the general felt much as he might have done at parting with a friend going to execution. He blew his nose with a noise that reminded one of the bugle, and then shook hands with Morley.

"I have a beastly cold coming on fast, I am sure. One can't keep free from them in this climate," he said, rather huskily; and Morley hastened away.

He found Vaughan and Corporal McAndrew in the middle of an argument, the former looking flushed and angry.

"Look here, Morley," he said, "what do you think of this? Here's McAndrew objects to going, and wants me to give it up."

"Oh, he does, does he? And what is the reason of that, McAndrew? You were willing enough to come when we left Chutnegunj."

"Weel, sir, it seems to me that it's just tempting Providence. We ha'e been maircifully delivered till now. Shall we go and rin into danger again now we are safe?"

"If that's your view of the case, you had better stop here. I dare say we can manage without you—eh, Vaughan?"

"Yes, of course we can. But I never thought McAndrew would fail us. It is very mortifying. You can go," he said, sharply, to the Scot, who made a movement to leave the young men, and then stopped.

"Winna you give it up, sir?" he asked, addressing Vaughan.

"I told you to leave us," said Vaughan, sharply.

Without another word McAndrew withdrew.

"Provoking, isn't it, old fellow?" said Vaughan. "But I shall not take him against his will, as he would, probably, be more hindrance than help in that case."

Morley was silent, and Vaughan looked at him more attentively.

"Are you not well, Morley?"

"Perfectly, thanks."

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"The matter? Nothing."

"Are you beginning to feel any hesitation, then? Do you think with McAndrew that it is folly to leave here at present?"

"Folly or not, I believe I should go mad if I had to remain here inactive longer," said Morley, gloomily. "But on quietly thinking it over, one cannot help seeing that our chance of success is so very small as to be almost *nil*. Shut up in the palace of this rajah, how on earth are we to get to them? It looks so hopeless. I would give my life to save her—them; but I fear that both our lives will be sacrificed, without our ever being able to get near them."

"At least, we will make the attempt," said Vaughan, quietly, as he passed his thumb over the edge of his sword, trying its sharpness.

"I have been talking to our spy again, and have learned how he gained his information," Morley resumed. "It seems he fell in with an emissary of the rajah, who was sent to some one here with a message. By Jove, Rob!" he exclaimed, as a sudden thought struck him, "I should not wonder if that message was to Jhod Rao!"

"Why?" asked Vaughan, looking at him in some astonishment.

"Because that villain has suddenly left Bagra, in the most unaccountable way, Carnley tells me. Depend upon it, he has gone where we are going."

"So much the worse for him," said Vaughan, in a low tone. "When he and I meet in fair fight, it will go hard with one of us."

They were soon after, in company with the Indian lad, passing the sentries on guard; in a few minutes the gates closed after them, and they were following their guide down a narrow, unoccupied street.

Suddenly, as Vaughan glanced behind him into the darkness, he became aware of the sound of footsteps following at a rapid pace. He drew Morley's attention to it.

"I heard," said Morley. "Never mind. It is but one man, and we can soon settle with him if he interferes with us."

Increasing their speed, they hurried on; but a look over his shoulder convinced Vaughan that their pur-

suer was gaining on them, for he was faintly visible now.

A few moments later he was almost upon them, and the three faced round and waited.

"Gude presairre us, what a race you ha'e given me," panted the new-comer.

"McAndrew," exclaimed both young men at once, but in a subdued tone.

"Go on, sir—it isn't safe to stop here," said the Scot; and they started again, their guide leading them up and down strange intricacies of streets, till they had lost all idea of their locality.

"Why have you come, McAndrew?" asked Vaughan. "I thought you were to stay at the fort."

"Weel, captain, if ye insist on rinning into danger, I must do it too. I wad ha'e kept ye safe at Bagra if ye wad ha'e heeded my words; but it wasna' for my ain sake I spoke, which you might have known."

"Where on earth is the boy taking us to, Vaughan?" said Morley, in a whisper. "If he were to leave us now, it would be impossible to find our way back to the fort during the night. Hush, what is that?"

It was a murmur of voices in advance, and the native turned sharply round.

"Back, sahib," he whispered. "Sepoys up there. This way."

He led them back for a short distance, and then branched off down a turning.

They had not gone far when, all at once, three men sprang out from a doorway, and arrested their progress. In the dark the young men imagined their assailants to be some half-dozen in number; but they were determined not to be stopped now.

The one who attacked Vaughan fell heavily to the ground the next minute. A well-directed blow put Morley's antagonist to flight, and his footsteps grew less and less distinct as he sped down the street. McAndrew, however, did not fare so well. He was lying prostrate, while his enemy knelt on him, and he was every minute expecting to feel a knife-thrust, when his assailant suddenly gave a deep groan, and fell over, pierced by the weapon of the native lad.

Vaughan's man half-raised himself the next minute, and gave vent to a long, shrill cry for aid, which rang and re-echoed through the empty street, as though it would rouse all the sleeping world.

"Come, quick," hissed the native in their ears. "Quick, or we are lost."

He led the way; and, as another cry pierced the silence, they started at a run, exerting all their powers to keep up with the fleet-footed Hindoo, who stopped now and then to make sure that they were close behind.

At last the houses were left in the rear, and the open country reached, and then only the lad stopped for breath, while his companions wiped off the perspiration that streamed down their faces.

"Why did you not kill him, sahib?" he asked Vaughan. "That cry would bring many sepoy in pursuit."

"What does it matter?" said Vaughan. "We are safe now, for they will not attempt to follow us out

here, in this darkness. Do you know where we are?"

"Yes, sahib. In half an hour we can be in the great road that leads north from Bagra."

CHAPTER XXI.—"THE COLONEL'S KELASSIE!"

DORA and Mabel listened to Rao's words with very different sensations. A feeling of utter despair crept over Mabel, her head drooped, and she pressed her hands over her face to hide the bitter tears that welled forth. It seemed so doubly hard to become again a captive, after the brief, delusive feeling of freedom; and that the brave young ensign should lose his life through his gallant attempt at rescue half broke her heart.

Dora, on the contrary, though she turned pale as death, looked defiantly at Rao, and her hands clenched involuntarily. Her bosom heaved with anger and detestation of the man whose eyes were fixed on her in open admiration.

"You will kill him?" she exclaimed, in horrified tones. "Oh, that I were a man, that I might—"

"What?" said Rao, approaching her. "Come," he said, trying to take her hand, which she snatched away, "listen to me, and you, too," he said, turning to Mabel. "I have come all the way from Bagra for my fair Feringhee maiden, but you are Ismail's. He sent a messenger to tell me you were with him, when, see! I had nearly lost my hour through this boy. Shall I not punish him? He ought to die, but I will only cut off his thumbs and let him go if you will agree to my wishes."

Dora's eyes dilated with horror, and she shrank back, shuddering.

"She," he indicated Mabel as he spoke, "must go back quietly to the palace, where the rajah will make her ranee. You must come with me."

As he received no reply, he returned to his servants and gave some orders, which the two girls could not understand, but of which they guessed the import, when they found that the result was a general adjournment to the tree where Payne was bound.

Pieces of carpet were spread, and Jhod Rao intimated to his captives that they were to sit down. As they obeyed, the little Hindoo maid threw herself down by them. Rao seated himself just opposite Payne, and his numerous attendants ranged themselves in a circle which precluded any possibility of escape.

Dora and Mabel both turned cold with the same horrible idea. They thought poor Payne's last moment had come.

"Pray him to spare him," whispered Mabel. "Oh, Dora, I cannot bear it! If he is human, he must have some pity in him. He will heed you more than me."

Dora rose, and in an instant one of the natives grasped her arm, but at a word from Rao she was released. She stood before him with clasped hands, and tried to speak, but the words refused to come.

"Miss Vaughan—Dora," said the ensign, firmly, "let him do his worst as far as I am concerned. Entreaties will be vain addressed to him."

"He is not to die yet," said Rao, seemingly in

momentary pity for her distress. "I have some questions to ask him first."

Dora tottered back to her place, and sank down, half fainting, beside Mabel, whereupon he signed to a servant to bring her water.

Payne had witnessed this little scene with the veins starting out on his forehead, as he made one futile attempt to burst his bonds and spring to her side. Jhod Rao watched him with a malicious smile.

"Feringhee," he said, "you come from Chutne-gunj. What is the number of the garrison there?"

The ensign was silent.

"Answer me, or I will make you."

"You cannot make me, if I refuse, Jhod Rao."

"Bring her here," said Rao; and Dora was brought to him, Mabel's attempt to follow her being frustrated.

"Now," said Rao, grasping her wrist with a hold she in vain endeavoured to shake off. "What is the number of the garrison?"

"I will tell you," said Payne, after a minute, "if you let her go."

Dora's hand was at once released, and she moved away slowly, glancing fearfully at Payne and his questioner.

"How many are there in the garrison?" asked Rao again.

"I do not know," said Payne, quietly.

A look of rage came over Jhod Rao's face, and he drew his tulwar without a word.

As she saw the deliberate action, the Hindoo girl gave a sudden scream of horror.

"Oh, mem sahibs, he will kill him!"

The young ensign saw what was coming, and turned his eyes towards Dora, who stood as if paralysed with terror. Then he set his teeth to keep back the groan that strove for exit, and waited.

Rao smiled grimly as he felt the edge of his weapon. Then, grasping the hilt firmly, he raised it, just as Dora gave a faint sigh, and sank to the ground.

The slight sound made Rao turn, and he remained a minute looking at the unconscious girl. That minute saved Payne's life.

The next instant there was a trampling of feet, and a body of European soldiers dashed in amongst the party, scattering them right and left.

Jhod Rao saw at a glance that the odds were against him, and made no attempt at resistance. He stooped, and, lifting Dora in his arms, bore her off, while one of his servants followed his example with Mabel.

But this was not done unperceived. Vaughan had caught sight of the pale face of her he loved, and dashed in pursuit; while Morley was in time to save Dora from being carried off by Rao's elephant.

Rao had mounted the ladder, and was leaning from the howdah to drag in the insensible girl, who was being carried up the ladder by a native, staggering under the weight.

Morley caught at the man, and pulled him down, for, burdened as he was, he could make no resistance.

"Take that, you scoundrel," said Morley, giving him a very English, but decidedly unmilitary, blow

with his fist that laid him on his back on the ground, as he threw his arm around Dora. The next instant, glancing up, he became aware that Rao, leaning from the elephant's back, was preparing for a cut with his tulwar, which, had it been made, would have put an end to Morley's interference for ever.

However, the young officer was too quick for him. Snatching his revolver from his belt, he fired point-blank, and Rao came head first from the howdah on to the native, who, just recovering from Morley's blow, was picking himself up.

Still holding Dora Vaughan, the young man looked round, to see that all the natives had taken flight, and were being pursued by the men who had assisted him and Vaughan in the rescue. Rao's elephant, alarmed by the shot fired so close to its ear, trotted away, as Morley carried Dora to where Vaughan was endeavouring to restore Mabel to consciousness.

"Poor child," said Morley, as he laid her gently down. "What she must have gone through! How deathly white she looks!"

"Me see to the mem sahib," said a voice close to him, and he looked up to see the young Indian girl holding out her hands to him to be untied. He cut the cord that held them, when she immediately knelt down, and began in a businesslike manner to rub Dora's hands and loosen her dress.

Morley turned his attention in another direction as the men came straggling back from the pursuit.

"What does this mean, Vaughan?" he said. "A native tied to a tree! Shall I set him free? Why, the poor wretch is dead already, or nearly so. Here, you, take this knife and cut the cords while I hold him up. I believe he has only fainted, after all. That's it."

He laid Payne on the ground, without recognizing him in the least, and moved away.

"Give him some brandy, my man, and try and bring him to. And now let's have a look at this other fellow. By Jove, it's the major's villain!" he exclaimed, as he turned over a man who was lying face downwards, with a cut on the head, bleeding profusely. "How on earth did he come here?"

The major's servant had been released at first by the new-comers, but a tulwar had cut him down the next minute, so that there was no one to answer Morley's question, and explain how the little party came to be so strangely situated.

Morley bound up the wound, and then left the poor fellow to some of the men, while he returned to Dora, but not without more than one look at Mabel's pale face and closed lids.

As he neared her, Dora sighed and opened her eyes, to look vacantly at him at first. Then a sudden rush of colour came for an instant to her cheek, and her eyes drooped as she sat up.

The maid, seeing her so far recovered, went to Mabel, to add her endeavour to Vaughan's.

A feeling of perfect security, which she had not known for many days, stole over Dora.

"We are saved," she said, softly.

"Yes, thank Heaven for it," said Morley, very earnestly.

The deep, heartfelt tone sent a thrill through

Dora, that for a moment made her forget everything else. The next minute, though, she looked anxiously round. "Where is Mr. Payne?"

"Payne!" repeated Morley, wondering.

"Yes, Ensign Payne, you know. He was here just before—"

Her eyes sought the tree where he had been bound, and then fell on the little group at its foot.

"Oh, I remember," she said, shudderingly, and covered her face with her hands.

Morley looked at her in a bewildered way, with a half-defined fear in his mind that her reason was going.

"I do not understand," he said, at last. "Harry Payne is at Chutnegunj, Miss Vaughan."

"Is he dead?" asked the girl, falteringly. "Perhaps he is not quite. I must go to him."

Morley assisted her to rise, with the fear becoming more defined and real each moment. She started to walk towards where Payne lay, but staggered, and had to accept the proffered arm, when again the quick colour dyed her cheek.

This time Morley saw it, and, ascribing it to its true cause, groaned inwardly.

"Poor child! poor child!" he thought. "Then, after all, her coldness was only put on—and that note!"

A deep sigh escaped him, and Dora glanced up, and down again, but said nothing till they reached where the man to whose care Morley had commended the supposed native was suddenly becoming very assiduous in his endeavour to restore consciousness.

Dora had forgotten that Morley knew nothing of the disguise, but as she looked at Payne the thought struck her.

"Let me come," she said, taking the little cup of brandy from the man, and kneeling down by the ensign's side. "Did you not know him, Mr. Morley? This is Mr. Payne."

"That!"

Morley looked and looked again in the greatest astonishment, as the dark features gradually resumed a familiar appearance.

"Harry here!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I thought that he was dead—killed, but he has only fainted. He is coming round."

In effect, as she spoke, Payne opened his eyes, and Morley sank on one knee by his side, and grasped his hand.

"Harry, my poor lad, I did not know you. How are you, old fellow?"

"Morley!" cried Payne, starting up, and looking round—"Vaughan! Saved! Oh, thank—"

His voice broke, and he turned from them to lean his arm against the tree and his head upon it, while all the men stared in open-eyed wonder.

"Come, Miss Vaughan," said Morley, in a low tone; and he led her away.

Mabel was standing, leaning on the maid's arm, with her hand in Vaughan's, and her eyes raised to his in a way that quickly cleared all Morley's repentant feelings from his heart. How he hated Vaughan at that moment!

Dora slipped her hand into her brother's, and he turned to her at once.

"Poor little darling," he said, throwing his arm round her, regardless of spectators. Dora laid her head against him, and wept as she had done on the day of their other reunion.

Meanwhile, Morley spoke to Mabel simply and frankly of the anxiety they had suffered on her account and Dora's, and of his gratitude for their safety.

"Morley," said Vaughan, a few minutes later, drawing him aside, "had we not better get back to the column at once? The captain will want to go on to-night."

"Certainly."

"Frank, it makes me half mad to think that villain has escaped."

Morley looked at him with a strange expression.

"Come here," he said, laconically, and led the way to where he had saved Dora from being carried off.

Rao lay there, shot through the heart.

"Whose doing was this?" asked Vaughan, half angry that Rao had fallen by any hand but his.

"Mine!" said Morley, with a shudder. "There, come away. I do not glory in the deed, but it was in self-defence."

They walked back in silence, each occupied with his own thoughts. Payne met them, and Vaughan held out his hand.

"You had a narrow escape, old fellow, according to what Miss Stafford tells me; but I do not know now how you came to be here, and in this disguise."

"Neither can I guess how you came to be in command of a lot of fellows from a strange regiment."

"We fell in with them encamped under some trees just as a native lad we have with us had brought us news that those we sought were in this wood, where they had been followed by Jhod Rao. I explained our case to the commanding officer, Captain Brown, who told off some two dozen men to assist us. It seems he was left in an entrenchment not far from Moolacund, which he was forced to abandon, and is now on his way north to join his regiment."

The two girls were soon after in possession of a tent which had been vacated for them, relating all their adventures to Vaughan, while they waited for nightfall, as their little party was to travel under Captain Brown's escort as far as their roads agreed.

At the same time Morley and Payne were in the captain's tent, where they were very hospitably entertained, and where their different accounts aroused much interest and sympathy.

"But, I say, Payne," said Morley, afterwards, when they were alone, "you have not yet said how you got the colonel's leave. He would hardly let us go, you know, and you alone seems such a very risky affair."

"I did not get it. Frank, I am a deserter."

"Good heavens!"

"There is the court-martial in prospect for me, you see. Well, I can't help it, and I don't care—at least, not much, now that she is safe."

At a late hour that night, the three young men walked up and down in the moonlight in earnest consultation. How were they to "get back into the

fort, surrounded as it was by the enemy? For some distance they would be under escort, and so far they were comparatively free from danger; but when the roads diverged, what would become of their little party of eight, three of whom were women?

It was a difficult question to solve, and for a time no answer came.

"There is but one way," said Vaughan, at last, "and that one is full of danger. We must get as near as possible unperceived, and lie concealed in some tope, while we send the Hindoo lad in with a message, and an exact explanation of where we are. Then they will send out and fetch us in."

"That must be it," said Payne, who still wore his disguise. "I would only suggest one improvement—that either I or Peter go with the message, instead of that stripling of yours. He might play false."

"We have proved him. Besides, he was so lately a mutineer that he will know enough of their movements to enable him to pass for one of their own spies."

"The worst of it is," said Morley, "that we must send a few written words, or his story will be imagined a trap; and then there is the danger of his being searched by the pandies. But we must risk that."

Just then the noise of kelassies loosening tent pegs warned them that preparations for a start were being made, and no more was said.

Mabel and Dora had the use of unoccupied doolies, of which they were not sorry to avail themselves, while with Captain Brown's company; so that when the column, after a march of two or three hours' duration, halted where the road forked, they were thoroughly rested, and ready to perform the rest of the journey on foot.

They parted from the officer, to whom they owed so much, with many expressions of gratitude; and soon the tramp of many feet grew distant, as the little party went on alone.

Vaughan explained their plans to the two girls, making as light of the danger as he could; but he need not have feared any agitation or expression of alarm on the part of either. Their experiences had taught them a lesson; and, feeling that they were with those who would give life itself, if necessary, in their service, they heard him calmly.

"You have all done so much for our sakes," said Dora, "and we can do nothing in return, except be obedient, and submit entirely to your guidance."

"Perhaps we may be wounded before long," said Morley, in the low tone they all used for fear of their voices penetrating to some ambush of the enemy. "In that case, we may call upon you to pay back the debt, if it exists, in nursing. Under such circumstances, a good slash would be rather a privilege."

He repented directly the words were spoken, for, though they were addressed to Dora, he was, in imagination, lying wounded with Mabel bending over him, and there was an undertone of earnestness in his voice which could not fail to make itself heard.

"I hope and pray it may not be so," said Dora, with a slight tremor in her voice.

"Morley is an idiot," said Payne to himself, with a resentment shared by Vaughan.

"We had better keep silence," said the latter, sharply; and they went on without a word being uttered for an hour or more.

Dawn found them hidden in a grove of trees not half a mile from the fort, when the native lad was at once despatched with a scrap of paper, on which Vaughan had scribbled—

"He is to be trusted."

The signatures of Morley and Payne were added to his own.

Then came long hours of waiting, while it grew hotter and hotter, and the suspense was almost unbearable. Any moment their hiding-place might be discovered, and at the slightest rustle among the trees the girls turned pale, while the faces of the young men assumed a sterner aspect.

The sound of firing was incessant, and they could hear the shouts of the sepoy mingling with the rattle of musketry.

No word from the lips of the two pale girls told how the dread of being seen was increasing each minute, as they looked upon the faces of their companions, whose eyes, watchful always, seemed never still.

Dora was observing the alert look on Morley's countenance with an expression which even at such a time made Payne intensely jealous, when suddenly she saw his eyes become riveted on one spot.

Turning in that direction, she caught sight of a malignant visage between some branches, for an instant, ere it disappeared, as Morley sprang forward in a futile attempt to catch its owner.

"Bob," he said, returning almost directly, "that man was Patan, the colonel's kelassie!"

Peruvian Guano.

WITH the approach of spring agriculturists will once again be called upon to solve the important problem as to what manure they can best and most profitably employ. We will take it for granted that farmers generally know, or can readily ascertain, the nature of the land they cultivate, and we will therefore leave them to supplement our remarks with such modifications as may be required by the varying nature of the soil. The object of this paper is to point out, in a general way, what considerations ought to guide the farmer in the purchase of his manure, and to show how this apparently difficult question can be greatly simplified.

The crops usually grown in the United Kingdom may be divided, with regard to manures, into two classes—crops requiring more nitrogenous than phosphatic nourishment, and crops requiring the converse, more phosphoric acid than ammonia. The former would include all cereal crops, such as wheat, barley, oats, &c., for which manures rich in ammonia will produce the best returns, whilst the latter would cover almost all root crops, hops, green crops, and most especially pasture lands.

We need not go into further details to show that for the first class a manure richer in ammonia, and of proportionately higher commercial value, is required than for the second class, which, with a

manure containing no more than three to four per cent. ammonia, but having a large per-centage of phosphates and variable proportions of alkaline salts, will produce the best results.

Thus, knowing the class of manure required, the next point is its selection from amongst the bewildering number offered, under the most promising aspects, by countless makers, dealers, and their agents.

As a safe rule, we recommend that, whatever manure be decided on, care should first of all be taken to buy it pure—in other words, to act like Quin, when he demanded from the milkmaid milk in one jug and water in the other, so that he could mix them for himself.

The only safeguard is for the buyer to draw his own samples, and have them analyzed by a chemist of undoubted standing; or in the case of raw imported manures to draw supplies direct from the import vessels, or from parties whose warehouses are always open to inspection, and who thus offer every assurance that no mixing or underhand work is being practised.

The different devices adopted, such as lead seals, special labels, guarantees, &c., are but poor and inefficient guarantee, compared with the assurance obtained by one's own investigation.

Having thus shown the very simple way of procuring what we require, we will briefly classify manures under the following heads:—

1. The Natural Manures.

2. The Artificial Manufactured Manures.

Amongst the former we have to mention as of chief importance nitrate of soda and guano, the two staples of all manures.

The second class contains a numberless variety of compounds prepared for various objects, and sold under an endless choice of denominations.

The principal constituent elements of all artificial manures of any value are always nitrogen and phosphoric acid; and the skill of the manufacturer consists in pounding, mixing, and treating the materials, which will yield at a minimum cost the best proportion of these elements, in the form most favourable for absorption by the plant, and, in the case of the so-called special manures, by certain species of plants in particular.

There can be no doubt that some artificial manures prepared with great skill and knowledge are fully worth their price, and that agriculturists are certainly justified in using them.

In all such instances manufacturers show an equal desire that their customers should have every facility of convincing themselves by sampling and analysis of the value of such articles.

Some of the leading firms in that trade deserve the highest commendation for having from the outset endeavoured to familiarise the consumers with the analytical importance of manures, and for having encouraged the examination of their manufactures by scientific men.

The danger to consumers lies in the second-rate and spurious articles, which we may safely assert are in no trade so abundant.

The only protection is, as said before, to draw one's own sample, and before buying to have a

proper analysis made by a chemist of high standing.

Reverting to what we called "natural manures" we mentioned nitrate of soda, the simple and almost uniform composition of which leaves little room for remarks.

As a nitrogenous manure it is certainly the most powerful to be had, and its uniform state of division has brought it into special favour with the farmer.

However, for reasons which would require too much space to enumerate here, its price during the last twelve or eighteen months has risen over 50 per cent., and what was formerly an excellent and very cheap manure at £10 per ton is becoming ruinous at £15, when in other natural manures the nitrogen or ammonia can be had at a lower price, as is principally the case in genuine raw Peruvian guano, which, although lower in quality than in years past, must still be considered as holding the very first place amongst manures, on account of the relative proportions of its fertilizing constituents, and their actual state of combination.

Many have been the objections against guano, and some of them have been perfectly justified, either by the price or by the quality of the supplies during late years. It cannot be denied that cargoes of very inferior guano have been sold at an uniform price of £12 10s., which was that fixed by the Peruvian Government for guano of good quality.

There is also no doubt that on account of the great value and increasing demand, no article has been so much manipulated as guano, and all the deceptions caused by spurious articles have had their detrimental effect upon the consumption of the genuine guano, the value of which, however, cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that the very best and most respectable manure manufacturers introduce the name into the appellations of their highest class manures.

We are ready to admit what we conceive to be just grounds for complaint, but at the same time we think that we are bound in fairness to refute other remarks, which are based on motives so apparent as not to require any close investigation.

We may summarise these allegations as follows:—

(a) That the condition of the guano now imported is so unsatisfactory that farmers cannot sow it, especially by drills, without previous manipulation.

(b) That the cargoes now imported are neither of so high nor of so uniform a quality as they used to be in former years, when its large consumption was thus justified, whilst now artificial manures or guano, improved by chemical and mechanical treatment, ought to be taken as the best substitutes.

(c) That the ammonia of the raw guano will evaporate, and that, consequently, long storage deteriorates its quality.

(d) That the proportion of soluble phosphates in guano is too small to offer the plants sufficient nourishment.

We desire to reply, as shortly as possible, to each of these objections.

(a) We have taken particular pains in ascertaining the condition of the cargoes lately arrived, and have found that in most cases the guano is in a fine powdery condition, and perfectly fit to be sown by

the drill. We mention particularly the arrivals from the Pabellon de Pica and the neighbouring Punta de Lobos deposits, which we found in an exceedingly dry state.

Sometimes lumps, called guano crust, are met in these cargoes; they, however, break easily by a blow with the shovel when being bagged before landing.

Other cargoes from the Huanillos deposits and Chinchas Islands, arrived in the United Kingdom, are somewhat heavier and slightly darker in aspect, but certainly neither damp nor in any way unfit to be sown either by hand or drill, and far superior in condition to the once so popular supplies from the Macabi deposits.

The objection to the condition is therefore entirely unjustified unless it is desired to manipulate the guano, and thus deprive the consumers of their best chance to get it pure, as imported.

It may be remarked, that however few lumps there may be in a guano, it would occasionally injure the drill by breaking its teeth.

We observe, in reply, that it is certainly desirable that lumps of undue size should not be in the guano; should, however, such be found, it is easy enough to take them out and crush or pound them, either with a mallet, or by one of the numerous crushers which are now on almost every well-conducted farm.

(b) The second objection that, owing to the quality being no longer such as it was in former years, guano ought to be superseded by artificial manures—and so-called "improved guanos"—would be perfectly justified if the prices asked for guano were the same as paid in former years.

Petrels and Cape Pigeon.

THERE is some confusion as to the birds alluded to under the title "Albatross and Cape Pigeon," the latter being clearly confounded with the stormy petrel, or Mother Carey's chicken. So far from the sailors being superstitious as to the capture of the Cape pigeon, which is of a black and white colour, and about the size of a tame pigeon, their catching is looked upon as an amusing recreation for the younger passengers on board, and occasionally for the sailors themselves. I have caught many molly mawks—a bird of the same description, but of smaller size—but never heard of their being edible, and their rank smell is enough to convince most people who have handled them that it would require a very good cook indeed to fix them up into an eatable dish.

The only use I have ever seen them put to has been the preservation of their pinion bones for pipe stems. I have never seen one shot, the method of capture being the dropping overboard of a pork-baited hook at the end of a log-line, the bait being kept stationary (to the limit of the line) by board floats. The albatross is very suspicious, and will touch nothing in motion; so as soon as the line has run out, it must be reeled up and the process begun anew. Hauling a good-sized albatross up a quarter of a mile, with wings and flat feet set against the water, is good work for three or four men. Most are labelled and collared, and let go again.

In southern latitudes the Cape pigeons follow a ship in thousands. They are caught as follows:—

A common bottle cork is tied to the end of a long piece of thread, and trailed behind the stern, so that the cork touches the water. This gives the required tension or tautness to the thread. As the birds fly in clouds from side to side astern, some of them constantly strike the thread with the wing, and the resistance is enough to turn them over it, when the thread is wrapped round the wing, and the bird is hauled on board. It is no exaggeration to say that hundreds are thus caught in a day.

I remember when sailing to India on board the ship *St. Lawrence*, with troops, in 1861, and a shipful of passengers, that on the 1st September (the opening day of sport in England) we first struck pigeons, and sweepstakes as to numbers soon took the place of the excitement of hauling a single bird on board. As well as I can recollect, we caught over 600 to half a dozen corks.

Against such numbers of pigeons, I saw but one stormy petrel caught on that or any other voyage. The ship's doctor, a young surgeon named Garner, caught one on his thread. He took it to his cabin, where, being an enthusiastic naturalist, he proposed to kill and skin it. It was his first voyage, and he was much elated at securing the specimen. Half an hour afterwards, a deputation from the crew, headed by a boatswain's mate named Hawes, arrived to beg him to let the bird go, or some dire calamity would happen. He agreed to do what they wished, but killed and preserved the bird as soon as their backs were turned—a fact which came to their knowledge later on, when they grumbled exceedingly at the risk he had put the whole ship to.

I forget whether it was on the following Christmas or New Year's Day, but on one of them, while the *St. Lawrence* was at anchor in the Hooghly, off Calcutta, the doctor dropped dead off his chair after dinner from heart disease, and, on a visit which I shortly afterwards paid the vessel to liquor up those who had brought me through a four months' voyage, the sailors, one and all, gravely attributed his death to his slaughter of the Mother Carey's chicken; and I am convinced that meddling with another on any future voyage would have provoked that ship's company almost to mutiny.

The Tennessee "Man-Fish."

DR. L. P. YANDELL was among the medical men who took a look at the man-fish of Mr. Whallen, mentioned some time since in the *Courier Journal*. He gives in the *Medical News* the following interesting statement in regard to the wonder:—

A short time since the Tennessee and Kentucky newspapers contained a startling account of a wild man, lately captured, with great difficulty, in the Cumberland Mountains. He was six feet six inches high, wonderfully fleet of foot and excessively savage. He fed chiefly on raw fish, which he captured without aid. He spent much of his time in the water, and after being captured he had to be frequently bathed. He was covered with shining scales, like those of a fish. His hands and feet were webbed like the feet of water-fowls—so the newspaper accounts, with many embellishments, ran. It is scarcely necessary to say that most of this story was

only showman's talk, uttered to attract the attention of the curious and credulous public.

The physicians of Louisville were invited to visit the monster upon his arrival in the city, prior to his general exhibition. Among others I visited the merman; but before seeing the case I had diagnosed it as one of *ichthyosis*, and a single glance was sufficient to verify the correctness of my conjecture. The man-fish presents a most magnificent example of the form of *ichthyosis*, or fish-skin disease, called *ichthyosis serpentina*, or serpent skin; and his general effect is more that of a serpent than of a fish. But upon different parts of his body may be found nearly all the varieties of *ichthyosis*.

The resemblance of this man's skin to the shed skin of a boa-constrictor lately brought from the Zoological Gardens, in London, is almost perfect. About his joints the skin is loose and wrinkled, hanging in folds, and the scales are large, suggesting the skin of a lizard or alligator about their limbs and belly. His arms and legs remind one of the skin of the buffalo perch, the carp, or other large fish. The cuticle everywhere is dry and harsh, and never perspires. There seems to be an absolute absence of fat, and the man is shrunken and withered, of dead ash-grey appearance, except here and there, where he is brownish or blackish. Though only about fifty years of age, he impresses one as a very old man. The skin of the face is red and shining, and tightly drawn about the cheeks, pulling the lower eyelids down to such an extent as to perfectly evert them, making a horrible case of ectropion.

In some cases his scales are silvery, in others dark, and again in others small and briny. His hair is thin and dead-looking. The backs of his hands are fissured, and on his palms and soles the cuticle is greatly thickened. The fingers and toes seem shorter than natural, and the skin is drawn tightly back over both feet and hands. The septum between the fingers and toes seems to extend much farther down than usual, thus suggesting the webbed appearance before alluded to. He is considerably over six feet in height, and a man of a low order of intelligence.

He is married, and is the father of several children, none of whom, fortunately, inherit his malady; and as *ichthyosis* is almost if not always a congenital disease, they are not likely ever to have it. The fish-man fails to present but a single variety of *ichthyosis*, and that is the porcupine disease, as it is called. In this spines, formed by hardened sebaceous material, protrude from the skin, closely packed together. Wilson states that he has observed them a quarter of an inch long. Willan reports having encountered them of an inch in length. I have never seen them longer than an eighth of an inch. Many years ago, two brothers in England having this form of *ichthyosis* were exhibited in the show as porcupine-men.

Ichthyosis is one of the rarest of skin diseases. I am under the impression that it is more frequent in Europe than in this country. In ten years I have seen less than a dozen cases. Its cause, as I stated in my report to the American Dermatological Association in 1877, is scrofula, according to my observation and experience. It is found in all the walks of life. I have encountered it with equal frequency

among the rich and the poor. It is commonly considered incurable, and only temporarily and partially mitigable.

A Bear Hunt.

"AND now I will tell you about Texas Bill's last bear hunt. One evening last fall we were sitting out on the piazza about nine o'clock, when neighbour Ford rode up and wanted me to go over to Rock Creek, about three miles, and help kill a bear. He said his wife's mother and a boy about twelve years old had been down on the creek that day looking for some bees, and they saw a bear run into the rocks. So I saddled up, took my dogs, and with Charley and Ford started for the bear. When we got nearly to the creek we found another man by the name of Russian waiting for us. When we got to the creek we went down about half a mile and hitched our horses, and began to climb up the bank among the rocks and trees, and after fifteen minutes' hard labour we got to where the woman and boy saw the bear go in. It was a wild-looking place in a small ravine, with rocks on both sides, piled up one above the other, and big boulders scattered all about. The place where the bear went in was large enough for a man to get in easy, and about thirty feet back of where he went in was a large hole that went down, and not the one that went straight in. All the time while we were building a fire we could hear a noise in the hole like a hoarse sissing or grunting, and thought perhaps Mr. Bear did not like his company. After we got a fire we could not look into the hole but a little way, and F. went about a mile and got a lamp about as good as a lightning bug. Russian proposed to stay all night and have daylight to work in, but I did not want to stay till I found out what I was staying for. While we were talking F. took the lamp, and went to the upper hole, and got down to look in.

"H—!" says he, "I can see him!"

"Well," said I, "what is it?"

"It is a bear as sure as the devil! Come and take the lamp and see for yourself."

I took the lamp, and got down and peeked in; and there he was. But I could not see very plain, so I crawled in a little farther. Charley wanted me to come back for fear he would make a dive at me, but I ventured carefully in a little more, and then could see his head and shoulders a little plainer; but I could not make out what the deuce it was. Its head seemed to be white, and snout black, and what I could see of his shoulders was black. Finally F. says—

"What do you make it?"

"Well, I think it is a—hog, and if you will hand me a gun I will try to put his eye out."

They got my gun, and I ventured in a little more to get a good chance to shoot; but I got a little too near, and it moved, and hissed, and grunted fearfully; but when it moved, I could see it plain, and tell what it was; and what do you think I saw? A couple of young buzzards! They stood side by side—their necks and wings white, their backs, tails, heads, and bills black—and in the dim light and

the position they were in, looked like the head of some large animal.

R. says, "Why don't you shoot?"

I said nothing, but crawled out; and F. says, "What are you going to do now?"

"Well, I think the best thing we can do is to go home."

R. says, "Why the devil don't you tell us what it is down there in the rocks?"

I bothered them a few minutes, and then told them it was buzzards; and I don't believe you ever heard such a shout from a few mouths as went up through the trees from around that bare hole. We blew out our lamp, got into saddles, and went home, certainly wiser if not as happy as when we went out; and that is the last hunt I have had after bears.

The Swedish Arctic Expedition.

THE north-east passage expedition in the *Vega*, under Prof. Nordenskjöld, reached the mouth of the Lena in the latter part of August, and we may every day expect news of its safe arrival at Yokohama. Meantime, Mr. Oscar Dickson, of Gottenburg, the generous supporter of the expedition, has published a letter from Prof. Nordenskjöld, giving some of the results obtained in the Novaya Zemlya region.

While detained at Yugor Strat, to the south of Novaya Zemlya, a visit was paid to the Samoeide village of Chabarova. Dr. Stuxberg collected many specimens of the fauna of the Strait, including some remarkably large cilicious sponges. Many specimens of various kinds of fish were bought from the natives. Dr. Kjellman collected numerous specimens of the flora of the region, and directed his attention specially to the morphology and development of the phanerogamous plants of the Arctic regions—a subject hitherto little studied. Lieut. Nordqvist devoted attention to insects, while Dr. Almqvist examined the Samoeides with regard to their sense of colour, and found it normally developed in them.

Prof. Nordenskjöld bought some costumes, utensils, &c., from the Samoeides, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in obtaining specimens of their "gods." They at first evaded his inquiries, but at last an old Samoeide woman consented to show him some. She drew them from a bag, where they were packed with much care in reindeer skins. Prof. Nordenskjöld at last succeeded in persuading the old woman to sell him several idols at the price of seven roubles. Each of them had a different purpose and aspect. One, for example, was composed of a stone, which fine rags transformed into a kind of a doll; another was a marionette, with a plate of copper for a face; a third was in fur adorned with earrings and pearls.

In general, these objects of veneration and adoration of the Samoeides resemble the rude rag dolls of children who are unable to obtain anything better. Chabarova is inhabited in summer by nine Russians, who in spring come from Poustosersk, where are their wives and children. They depart in autumn. During their sojourn these Russians carry on a barter traffic with the Samoeides, and engage

in fishing and in rearing reindeer. The Russians inhabit little wooden cabins, low and covered with turf; while the indigenes have tents of reindeer skin, similar in form to those of the Lapps.

The Russians have formed a company to fish the white dolphin, two out of the twenty-two shares of the company being reserved for St. Nicholas, to secure his blessing. In spite of this, their enterprise has not been very successful. Dr. Nordenskjöld, guided by one of the Russians, visited one of the sacrificial altars of the Samoeides, who, although baptized Christians, retain many of their old heathen customs.

"GREAT ceremonies are necessary," says the *Railroad News*, "to get a train off in Germany. When all is ready a bell rings. Then another bell rings. Then the engine whistles, or rather toot-toot-gently. Then the conductor tells the station-master that all is ready. Then the station-master looks placidly around and says 'So?' Then the conductor shouts 'Fertig?' interrogatively. Then the station-master replies 'Fertig!' positively. Then the conductor blows a horn; the engine whistles; the bell rings; the other bell rings; the station-master says 'So?'—the passengers swear in various tongues—and the train starts. That is, unless there is a belated fat man—in which case they do it all over again."

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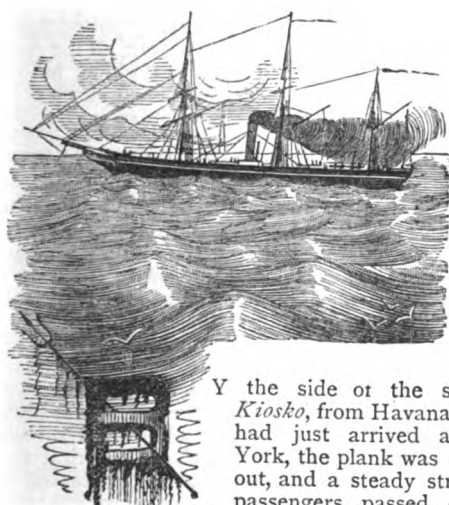
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The Agate Cross.

CHAPTER III.



Y the side of the steamer *Kiosko*, from Havana, which had just arrived at New York, the plank was thrown out, and a steady stream of passengers passed over it into the great thoroughfare.

All sorts and all classes, rich and poor, gentle and simple, alike poured forth to mingle with the turbulent tide of the city. The haughty don and the sinister exhibitor of hand-organ and monkey jostled each other unceremoniously, while the light-hearted, blue-eyed, busy New Yorker, more eager than either to place his foot again on home-ground, brushed hastily past, and was lost to view.

Among the last to leave the vessel was one whom we will follow as he leisurely takes his departure, having waited until the crowd was gone. He was decidedly Spanish in appearance, having a clear olive complexion, dark eyes, and an abundance of dark curly hair, together with a moustache so heavy as to completely hide his mouth, and redeem features which otherwise would have been effeminate.

He was of a slender figure, plainly and neatly dressed in black, and bearing tokens of refined habits in every motion. Quiet and retiring in his manner, the fierceness of his keen black eye yet made him seem one well able to take his own part in the battle of life.

He beckoned a cab, and, pointing to his baggage, sprang in, and was driven rapidly to the — House. Here for days he kept himself in the utmost retirement, going out only at nightfall, and returning late at night. A very peculiar young gentleman, the attendants at the hotel thought

him, never noticing any one, and just minding his own business too much for their complacency or pockets. He was registered as Don Julian Estange, remained nearly a fortnight, and then left.

Two months after he took his departure from the — House, the proprietor of the billiard establishment, No. —, Broadway, received a visit from a person whom we recognize as Don Julian, and from the cordial manner in which he was received, it was evident that the visitor was a welcome one.

"Ah, good evening, Mr. Estange, good evening! I hope you have thought favourably of our proposition. But walk into our private office, and we will talk it over."

One hour Mr. Albert Whitlock and Don Julian Estange were closeted, and when they came forth the latter had advanced a sum of money for the use of the establishment, and become a silent partner.

He had been for some time a constant visitor to the place, and his apparent ready means and calm impenetrability to the attractions of the table, beyond an unconcerned risking of occasional sums upon the chance of another throw, had suggested to Mr. Whitlock that as a partner his financial help would greatly benefit them.

As they passed through the saloon, the proprietor's face wore a pleased look; but the Spaniard, even while smiling, had a singular expression, and it seemed as though the cigarette upon which he so earnestly drew was used only as a cover to hide some carefully concealed expression.

A boy handed to Mr. Whitlock a delicately perfumed note, and, apologizing to his new partner, he tore it open, and, oblivious of the sinister, scrutinizing gaze bent upon him, read it in amazement.

"COUSIN ALBERT—I presume you have long ere this heard of the singular disappearance of my dear husband. I have almost entirely given up hope of ever again seeing him; still, it would be a consolation to me to be assured of his whereabouts, and to know, if possible, where he lies. For this purpose I have taken up my residence in this city, and being an almost total stranger, send to let you know of my arrival, that I may feel a little security in the presence of a relative, and, I hope, derive aid from him in my purpose. Forget old grievances, like a kind friend, and come and see me. I saw you on Broadway yesterday, but you had a Spanish-looking gentleman with you, so I passed on. I shall be at home to-morrow afternoon at four. Your cousin,

"JULIE WHITLOCK."

A flush of triumph crossed his face as he read the billet and its signature, and with clenched hands and set teeth he muttered—

"Once more, Julie; and this time, were legions to oppose me, mine you shall be, and woe and de-

struction to any (as to the first) who crosses my path."

The next afternoon, in carefully arranged costume, he was ushered into Mrs. Whitlock's cosy little parlour, and, after a few moments' waiting, she greeted him with smiling courtesy.

Never had she looked lovelier. Her half-mourning robes set off to wonderful beauty her Parian-like complexion, and, as if to show that she was not entirely inconsolable, a few small pink roses, natural ones, were placed in the bosom of her dress, adding just the tinge of colour which she needed. Her dark hair was cut short and arranged in clustering curls around her small, well-shaped head, making her appear almost girlish.

There was no trace of sadness in her face now. Smiles and dimples occasionally flooded it in sunshine as she chatted with her visitor, recalling some reminiscence of old-time frolics, and if the subject chanced to embrace her lost husband, with a sharp effort it was quickly changed, and nothing but a momentary drooping of the eyelid and a spasmodic breath gave token of her feelings.

Albert Whitlock—always in love with her—striving and hoping against hope with his cousin, hating him with a deadly hatred at the altar, and never, even after their marriage, able to cast out from his bosom his love and hate, met her again free, with a gratification and exultation he did not attempt to conceal.

He became immediately a regular visitor in her parlour, and she received him with a favour which intoxicated him. The bad, wicked man of the world became a very child in the hands of this siren.

She alternately petted and caressed or rudely rebuffed him, as her pleasure or tactics led her; and, feverish with hope or chilled with doubt, but more and more madly in love as the days flew on, he urged his suit upon her with vigour.

Although seeming at times to reciprocate his passion, she, however, steadfastly refused to bind herself in any way to him until she could be satisfied that her husband no longer existed.

"Bring me," she would say, "some positive evidence. Find me the agate cross, which I know he would never part with alive; and 'tis not likely he would be consigned to the grave with his watch and chain (to which it was attached) upon him. Discover for me his fate, what befell him, or where he lies; and then we will talk of the future. But I shall never marry again until I have the agate cross in my possession. Evil would befall me were I to do so. Upon my wedding day I solemnly promised George that, were he to die first, I would carefully guard the cross until his brother became of age, and then pass it over to him, with its history, as the rightful owner of the heirloom."

With fierce, contending emotions he would be obliged to take his departure. Too well he knew where to obtain the article demanded; but at what a price!

Knowing the pretended qualities of this cross, he had not dared to leave it above ground, and the same grave or pit held at once the body of his murdered cousin and the agate cross. It was not far

that he would be obliged to go to get it, for the vault of his billiard establishment held that and many other secrets, but it was an act requiring no small amount of courage to look again upon his victim; and worse than all was the dread presentiment that the unearthing of the blood-eyed avenger (as it was sometimes called) was signing with his own hand his doom.

During this period of bewildering, almost crazing uncertainty, it was fortunate, perhaps, that, reckless about the business himself, his silent partner, Julian Estange, seemed to have acquired a sudden taste for it. He was making himself acquainted with all the plots and plans of the establishment, and perseveringly, but in an apparently careless fashion, making himself familiar with all its history.

Standing aloof in quiet reserve from all the *roués* and gamblers connected with the place, he yet seemed to hear and carefully note each careless retrospection uttered under the impulse and excitement of the moment.

Under some plausible pretext he dismissed two of the inferior attendants, and himself supplied their places with others, who were eyed with jealousy by the rest. No one, however, dared murmur, for Don Julian was at the time omnipotent, money being more than ever necessary now in the time of the senior partner's unsettled state, and Mr. Whitlock would hear nothing against his partner, and himself treated him with the utmost suavity.

At first, in his desire to gratify and conciliate in every way so valuable an addition to his establishment, he had invited him to accompany him to the house of his inamorata, but had been put off with an apology until some future time; but that time never came. Mrs. Whitlock having expressed enthusiastic praise of his personal appearance (having, she said, seen them together in the street), his old enemy, jealousy, was aroused, and the invitation never repeated.

Every day the same hour found him punctually at the widow's, and as she never allowed him to remain over a certain length of time, he was fain to content himself before the time in anticipation, and after it in retrospection.

Time wore on, and the two new men supplied by the new partner became less obnoxious to the other attendants, for, although at times their suspicions that all was not right would be aroused by some singular act on the part of one or both of them, yet they managed, by a cordial, hearty good-fellowship, to secure the general good opinion of their associates.

Don Julian Estange also gained complete control over his partner, winning his confidence on every point, even to his hopes and fears regarding the widow. Much valuable time was spent in detailing to his patient listener the obstinacy with which Mrs. Whitlock (or Julie, as he called her) persisted in demanding proof positive of her husband's death, and complaining querulously of her exacting spirit.

To each and all Don Julian's reply, couched in different forms, was the same—"Find the cross, then, and satisfy her. That, surely, is no tremendous task to accomplish." At which he would "Pish!" and "Pshaw!" twist uneasily in his seat,

and glance askance at his partner, to see if he had any hidden meaning.

Once, indeed, Don Julian intimated that perhaps the widow had applied to the one who could best tell her of the cross; and, for a moment off his guard, Albert Whitlock cast a shrewd, almost conscious, look in reply, but, immediately recovering himself, left the room hastily.

But fretting and fuming remedied the matter not one whit; and at last, wrought to desperation, he told Julie he would find the proof she needed, or die in the attempt, for he would not live longer without her.

A flush of exultation crossed her face, but she smiled sweetly, and whispered lovingly—

"Then, Albert, I shall be happy. Ah, hasten the time when I can call you mine!"

In a delirium of passion at her words, he turned to clasp her to his heart, but she was gone. She had evaded his grasp, slipped out of the room, and, hurrying to her own private one, locked the door, and, with wild eyes and distorted features, raised her hands, and again repeated—

"Ah, hasten the time when I may call thee mine—for vengeance, vile man! No mercy! Ha! ha! Already I seem to have thee in my power. With my trusty aids at the billiard-rooms, and I here watching you, 'twere indeed strange if we miss or go astray."

Pale and haggard Albert Whitlock became during the ensuing week. Having determined to unearth the cross, he yet could not nerve himself to the frightful task, nor could he endure the questions and taunts which he knew he must meet and answer at the widow's if he presented himself there. So, with unwonted self-denial, he remained away.

Don Julian Estance was his constant companion during these hours, and sorely was the miserable man tempted to repose a confidence in him which he knew would place him in his power, and which, if betrayed, would be so disastrous to himself.

Saturday of the week came, and, conscious of the uselessness of postponement when he had decided to act, he resolved that the next day, being Sunday, should see the dread task accomplished; and, as the place would be closed, and the attendants away, he could depend with certainty upon no interruption.

Far into the night of Saturday, and into the small hours of Sunday morning, the *habitudes* of the place lingered, held by the fascination of their games. Drunkenness and vice had full sway. The heedless youth, beguiled by the glitter of the place, entering without a thought of the net spread for his unwary feet, left with pockets materially lightened, but with a heart proportionately heavy; and the professional gamblers carried away with them much that should have gone to make other homes comfortable.

But the end came. The last tardy lingerer departed, and, weary and footsore, the attendants extinguished the blaze of light that had been so attractive, and, with their week's work ended, gladly sought home and bed.

All had gone but the two partners and the two men last hired by Don Julian; and, as the partners came out of their private office, whither Don Julian

had called Mr. Whitlock for a moment's conference, the two had also disappeared. So, locking the office, they bade each other a civil good-night, and separated, Mr. Whitlock taking the keys of the establishment with him.

For an hour all was silent and dark in the rooms which had before been the scene of so much excitement and sin; then a faint glimmer of light penetrated the cracks from a door to a dark closet in the farthest apartment.

It opens slowly, and a man's form appears indistinctly in the faint light. He listens intently a few moments, and then, turning on the full blaze of the lantern, speaks a few words fearlessly, and a comrade steps forth.

It is Don Julian's two men, but they now display the badge of their office as city detectives on their coats. They speak.

"Well, Joe," said the one who first appeared, "we are all right, I guess; and as we have only a few hours remaining of the night, we had better make ourselves comfortable as soon as possible. I guess we both of us had a sort o' catnap in that cubby-hole we've just left, for I feel kinder drowsy now. He will not come 'fore morning, I know, so I propose taking a moderate nightcap, and finding a soft cushion to hug the rest of the night."

"Agreed, matey," was the laconic response from his companion; and, as they seated themselves at one of the tables with decanter and glasses before them, he continued: "But how, in the name of wonder, can you be so sure he is coming to-morrow, when we have been waiting and watching these two months and more? Don Julian seems equally positive, but perhaps he has a good reason for his—"

"Oh, pshaw, Joe! You're not much better than a novice, after all your experience. Put this and that together, man, like a woman does the seams of her dress. Takes a good many odds and ends to make a whole garment. See how moody and fidgety he has been for days past. Then, he's never been nigh the widow since Tuesday, to my certain knowledge, nor won't go, neither, till he can take satisfaction with him, which won't be soon, to my thinking. And the fellow's too big a coward to come here in the night-time. Let's see—what's it, Shakspeare, or Lord Byron, or Webster—somebody says about conscience making cowards of us all? Well, that's him—Whitlock! So, you see, there is no time left for him but Sunday, when the place is closed. As to being sure that the body is in the building—why, Joe, the man's a downright fool. He's told on himself a score of times in actions, besides which, he had no chance to get the body out of the house. It was seen early in the morning, and had to be got out of the way 'fore the night-crowd come along. I could go this minute almost to the spot, only I want to catch the rascal in the act. You see, 'twould save the trouble of a power of evidence. That dirk-handle with his initials on it, A. W., and those picters, go a long way, especially with the evidence of the man that took 'em. Fortunately he's in town again, and can't leave without our knowledge and permit. I've got a nabby watching him. So I hope a few days more will finish this little job for us, and break up this den

of infamy. I say, though, Joe, we had better look around downstairs, and see where we can hide ourselves when the time comes, so as to see without being seen. Bring the bracelets along. We must have them handy, for I expect he'll be a pretty desperate customer at the end."

Rising from their seats, they carefully replaced decanters and glasses, that no evidence of their presence might destroy their plot, and, lantern in hand, wended their way downstairs to the vault. It was a large place, most nicely masoned and finished off, in compartments for the various kinds of fine liquors.

At the further end of it was, however, a portion for which there seemed to be no use. It had been roughly boarded off, as if for a receptacle of old lumber, but had not been applied to any apparent purpose, as the boards of the partition reached to the roof overhead, which was quite low, and the cobwebs hung in thick festoons all over it. Indeed, any one not having his attention called particularly to it would have said that the vault terminated at the partition, and as it was of course very dark (being the sub-cellar), it would have taken a pretty close scrutiny to have awakened the idea in any one's mind that a vacant space existed behind that apparent side wall.

The two detectives conversed together in a low tone, as they looked searchingly around for a suitable place to stow themselves. They decided to separate, but be where they could signal each other; and, after choosing their respective positions, as near the partition (which they suspected as being the place) as possible, they started to return to the upper rooms.

Joe, looking at his watch, found it was four o'clock, and, suggesting that they had better hurry up or they would have no nap at all, he had placed his foot upon the first step ascending, when they were startled with the sound of a footfall overhead.

With a muffled "Whew—so soon!" they swiftly and silently sought their hiding-places, and, carefully shutting the dark lantern, awaited the *dénouement*.

Slowly and stealthily the footstep approached overhead. Nearer—nearer—at last a light flashed at the head of the steps, and the ghastly face of Albert Whitlock looked down.

A moment he paused hesitatingly, and then came down the steps with a hurried movement, and, without giving himself a moment's time for thought, never doubting his security from observation, went direct to the partition, and, setting down his light, easily slid five or six movable boards from their places, and laid them against the others. He then picked up a spade, which lay just where it had been dropped when last used, and proceeded to fulfil his dread task. Twice he started at the fancied sound of something clinking, but again, with large beads of perspiration standing on his pallid face, went to work.

A half-hour sufficed to bring him to the vicinity of the object of his search, for the body was not buried very deep; and as (with his back turned to the rest of the cellar) he advanced in his work, a figure arose from the darkness behind him, and,

motioning his companion to the other side of the opening in the partition, stood quietly watching.

So intent was the guilty man now, and so nervously excited with the dread of seeing that dead face, that he thought of nothing else. At last a sudden, desperate effort sent the spade apparently under the shoulder of the still covered body, for the upheaving of the implement turned and lifted the face of the corpse (which had been buried face down), with its dead eyes staring full in view of his murderer.

With a shriek, he started back, to be clasped in the firm embrace of the detective. Overcome by the awfulness of his position, and yet hardly realizing it was mortal hand that held him, he, for the first time in his life, swooned away to utter unconsciousness.

The two officers, taking advantage of his quiescent state, securely handcuffed him; and then, as he began to regain consciousness by their efforts, procured a glass of wine for him, and led him upstairs to await the morning.

Peruvian Guano. (Concluded.)

WE see, however, with great satisfaction, which will certainly be shared by all thoughtful consumers, that the agents of the Peruvian Government, "The Peruvian Guano Company, Limited," advertise conspicuously that all cargoes to their consignment are sold strictly upon analysis valuation of samples, drawn by independent parties, and analysed by the chemist of the Royal Agricultural Society of England.

If this means anything, it is that each cargo is to be sold on its analytical merits; and inasmuch as everybody can obtain the official analysis of any cargo on application to the Peruvian Guano Company, Limited, we think that no better mode of fair dealing to everybody can be adopted.

It now remains for us to examine what is the quality of the cargoes on sale or to arrive. We can only speak of those of which we have seen analyses, and as we have found that many of them contain over 7 per cent., and many of them from 8 to 12 per cent., of ammonia, we do not hesitate to assert that they constitute an excellent fertilizer, and think that agriculturists will receive from more competent quarters full confirmation of our opinion.

We put it to any intelligent farmer—Why, under these circumstances, let the guano first go into the hands of would-be-improvers, who certainly must have a way of returning 20 cwts. in the ton, and leave, besides, a fair remuneration for their benevolent trouble?

(c) That ammonia is a volatile substance, and that some of it will escape from the guano, if not used properly, stands to reason; but it is gross exaggeration to say that guano, even after a considerable length of time, will deteriorate in any marked degree either in warehouse or after its application to the soil if properly sown.

An inspection of the warehouses, as for instance the stores of the London Victoria Docks, will show the guano in bags put up in enormous heaps, built up so compactly that the air cannot circulate be-

tween the bags. The guano lies therefore almost as densely as in the deposits, where for years immemorial it has retained its ammonia.

There need likewise be little fear of its escaping when on the land, as a well-tilled ground, according to the best authorities, will not only retain all ammonia—or rather its volatile combination, carbonate of ammonia—which is brought in contact with it, but even absorbs this gas from the surrounding air.

It is certainly to be recommended that the guano be well harrowed in, or if for top-dressing, that it be sown during rainy weather.

(d) Replying to the last and least justifiable objection, that Peruvian guano does not offer sufficient nourishment to the plant on account of the supposed insufficiency of the contents of soluble phosphates, we must be allowed to digress for a few moments on scientific grounds.

It is a fact well known by all chemists that nearly one-third of the phosphoric acid in raw Peruvian guano is rendered soluble by an organic acid called oxalic acid, usually present in guano.

These soluble phosphates are by far more valuable as a fertilizing agent than the acid phosphates of lime produced artificially by treatment with sulphuric acid. The former, being phosphates of ammonia or potash, offer to the plant the most favourable nourishment—that is, phosphoric acid and ammonia of potash intimately combined.

Referring now to the remaining two-thirds of guano phosphates, which may be considered insoluble when the guano is put on the land, it must be well remembered that, imbedded as they are in other combinations of an organic origin, and easily to be decomposed, they are subject to the same chemical transformation and decomposition as the insoluble phosphate of lime contained in bones, about the value of which farmers have no misgivings, and do not consider it necessary to have them dissolved by sulphuric acid.

The phosphate of lime in bone-meal being, so to say, surrounded by cellular substance, becomes soluble in the soil by the presence of carbonic acid; the same in the Peruvian guano—the proportion of organic matter surrounding the phosphates is almost equal, but will decompose more quickly than the cellular substance of bones, and thus accelerate the transformation into soluble phosphates.

It is therefore very evident that, by a gradual process in the soil, all insoluble guano phosphates become soluble and capable of being absorbed by the plants; and this clearly demonstrates that, although the so-called dissolved guano has a more immediate effect on the vegetable growth, the results obtained with the raw Peruvian guano are of a much more permanent character, and more than one crop on the same soil enjoys its beneficial action.

We conclude our present remarks by saying that, given raw genuine guano and artificial or manufactured compounds of identical composition, and at the same price, we should unhesitatingly give the preference to the former, on the following grounds—

1. The combination and composition of its constituent elements, having been worked by nature

through the live organism of the birds, cannot be equalled by any amount of human cleverness or mechanical skill in preparing and mixing raw materials.

2. The consumer can, with little trouble, secure his supplies in a genuine state, and guard against adulterations.

3. The effects upon the land are more permanent than those obtained by any other manure.

The Summer Arcadia.

AS the Eastward bound traveller on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad steps out of the train at Kanawha Falls he finds himself, like the famous ass, hesitating between two prizes—for the tocsin sounds for dinner, the conductor calls the number of minutes allowed, and the odour of fragrant viands is wafted from the adjacent hotel; but the eye wanders from the cosy-looking inn to the beautiful landscape which surrounds it, and at one glance takes in a picture framed in blue sky and towering peaks—a clear blue lake at the confluence of New River and the Ganley, and a varied cascade tumbling over great boulders, and then spreading out over a field of shingles in ten thousand little jets of frothy foam.

To the eastward the sharp peak, that rises abruptly, is crowned by the old Indian Fort Defiance, along the face of the Southern Mountain winds the road made by General Washington, and just beyond the yard of the hotel is the log cabin occupied by Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, of the Twenty-third Ohio, in 1861, when a saucy rebel gun, almost overhead, pointed by the ex-Secretary of War, General Floyd, often caused the prospective President to trespass with a violent expletive on that staid and pious bearing which at present makes such a contrast to the cigar of his predecessor.

Above this charming glen the train toils up a deep narrow canyon, through which the New River comes plunging down over immense masses of rocks, piled as if to commemorate the battle of the fabled Titans, that with earthquake and thunder moved earth and heaven in their giant strifes. On the left hand Jefferson's Pillar arises fifteen hundred feet—a grey, jagged tower of rock, jutting out from the thick masses of green, and displaying from its scarred battlement, like tattered banners, the storm-torn cedars, which the unyielding spirit of the wild seems to hold there in defiance of nature and man.

A few miles above here Big Sewall advances two immense cliffs like grey, grim sentinels rearing their crests to the very sky, while opposite the deep wooded mountain rises to an equal height, and far below the solemn roll of the river gives the effect of awe and sublimity, the deep, reverberating monotone proclaiming the ever-rushing flow of time on and on to the sea of eternity.

The face of nature changes abruptly as the train leaves the New River and courses directly eastward, up the valley of the Greenbrier. It is a panorama of sweet, home-like pictures—the white farm-houses set in green meadows and clumps of orchard-trees, and the cow-bells faintly heard along the narrow valleys, making the refrain of that picturesque, quiet

and happy bucolic life which is nearest to nature and to God.

At Fort Spring Station we behold what in mid-summer to the eye of the sentimental rambler is the synonym of all delights—a coach and four—representing the old-time pleasures of the road, as Cinderella's chariot typifies the enchantments of fairy-land; yea, verily, it is the fairy vehicle to take us through the ideal olden time, for hath not the learned Dr. Johnson declared that perfect happiness sits on the box beside the coachman, and travels at ten miles an hour behind four spanking bays? Therefore, hail to thee, Jehu of the old stage road! let thy whip be the enchanter's wand and thy four steeds like the flying coursers of Phaeton, spurning the very clouds with their glowing hoofs, and mounting the steepes of Olympus; and we will alight presently from the giddy throne of fancy, and temper the icy draught from yonder crystal fountain with the stronger liquid.

This road from Fort Spring to Union is the ideal turnpike, running along the side of a spur range of the Alleghany, from which we view an enchanting landscape as from the balcony of a grand natural theatre. The luxuriant meadows extend mile after mile, each farm set with parks of sugar-maple, buckeye, and cucumber trees, and the rich green turf giving an effect of extreme luxuriance. The atmosphere is wonderfully exhilarating, even at noontide, imparting the sparkle of champagne, and not less delightful to the sight than to the lungs; for it is a dreamy and magic lens, through which we behold a beautiful Arcadia—fanciful, yet real, giving body and form to Campbell's magnificent rhapsody, and exhaling the delicious incense of nature.

He who enjoys this sight in the first blush of the morning, though his wayworn soul be racked with remorse, and his future clouded with the dark shadow of a creditor, will say "*Vade retro*" to both, as his disenthralled spirit drinks the delight of nature's virgin beauty. Aurora, with rosy-tipped fingers, pulls back the curtain of mist, and, unfolding yet finer, the night's dark uncertainty retaining the charm of its mystery, all the glorious view comes forth; and as the chorus of feathered songsters perform their beautiful pastorals, wrapped in a Sabbath-like purity, peak on peak the mountains rise and descend and rise again, until the blue on the horizon blends into heaven, and the rose-tinted clouds form into dome and spire, battlement and turret, the airy city of our fancy where hope leads us through dreamland.

Tumbling down from our lofty flight, we hear in the distance the early Vulcan of the village playing his ringing refrain on the anvil with a ponderous hammer.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

Clank! clank! clank! ringing and musical it resounds on the morning air, and then you hear the double stroke of the small hammer in cadence, and then a single keen spire, tinted with gold, marks where the pretty town nestles in the valley, embowered in trees and gardens. The blacksmith looks like a grim ogre or a gnome in the glare of the forge, but when he comes out of the shop with a red-

hot horseshoe in his tongs, he is a fair-haired giant, with laughing blue eyes and looking like the mythical Vulcan, a proper husband for Venus. He is one of the characters of the country, and upon occasion can draw a tooth as well as he can shoe your horse. The operation is performed by tying the subject to the anvil, the anvil to the forge, and a stout cord to the big sledge-hammer. He then swings the huge hammer thrice over his head, as Thor, the soldier-blacksmith, is supposed to have done, and launches it into the street, having first attached the other end of the cord to the subject's tooth. The result is certain; for, either the hammer has to stop, which it can no more do than the shot from Columbiad, or the tooth must come, unless the whole forge and shop give way, which is impossible. The blacksmith is so proud of this branch of his profession that he has marked in big charcoal letters over his shop door, "Tuthe ake kured in hear." And never was a sign more indicative of success in any line of business, for the man in that country who has the malady is told by everybody else what to do, and if he declines the violent remedy he is pronounced a coward, and if he tries it he is not likely to confess to any more "tuthe ake" for some time.

The handsomest man and the most talented lawyer in West Virginia is Gim Patton, who has a beautiful mansion in this town of Union, and is the only man in the State who can have a preacher staying in his house and stay away from church, which he properly considers a moral institution conducive to virtue, and therefore opposed to law, in the professional sense of the term. And certain it is that the pure air and natural beauty of the country, with the simpler and more devout sort of worship, have set the *imprimatur* of primitive honesty on a people who are the worthy descendants of the bold pioneers of the last century. The vague legend of a single crime falls on the incredulous ear of the stranger, and in the midst of this serene and peaceful land of plenty and content we are prepared to believe even that Gim Shanklin, the post-master, doesn't read the postal cards.

WALTONIAN.

Twenty miles south of Union on the main height of the Alleghany range is the Mountain Lake, a beautiful basin of blue limestone water, a mile or so in extent, a pretty cottage inn on the northern shore, and a jagged peak overhead, from which you may behold the territories of five States—the Black Mountain of North Carolina, cutting the southern horizon; and to the south-east the peaks of Otter, the two giant outposts of the Blue Ridge. In the ice cold depths of the lake no fish can live, but the tavern keeper can furnish you with a mule that can climb, and all you have to do is to make a trapeze journey "mule back," as the mountaineer calls it, to Booth's Fall, five miles down the mountain gorge; and the recluse of these wild solitudes, a scholar of sixty years' standing whom love and the world outlawed, will show you the deep glen with the cascade descending like a sheet of molten silver from a window in the roof of green foliage that canopies the narrow valley.

As we stand on a ledge of rock, the glassy pool of

water mirrors a single star at midday, and, looking aloft to see where the fallen gem came from, behold, there it is, set in a patch of emerald sky. A weird, unearthly light dances along the walls of green and grey, and all the real world is gone. Stand on the dangerous ledge behind the sheet of water, and the strange, solitary spirit of the wild, more satyr than man, gives you a gorgeous coloured fly and a line like the web of a spider. It dances down and down through the glistening light and rising spray into the frosty mass of foam, and then a sudden quiver on your rod and arm, and a scintillating thing like a gleam of lightning leaps and capers at the end.

It is only after the contest is over that the strange, wild excitement of the sport and the scene leaves you cool enough to examine the prize, a speckled trout eighteen inches long. Let the wild man beside you bestow him in the creel, and cast again, with the same result; no waiting for a rise, the only thing is you may slip from your dangerous perch, from this unreal world into still another, for temptation in sport, as in vice, waits like a fisher of men.

Some Waltonians say they are wearied at times by the monotony of success; but when you fish in this weird, fascinating elf-land it is the high tension on the mind and nerves, caused by the strange unreality, that leaves you longing to continue, but unable to stand up. The strange recluse of the valley helps you down and leads you along the ledges of rock—a tortuous path, and there leaves you standing on the mountain-side alone in the glare of the sunlight, with a creel full of trout in your hand to attest the reality of what seems a dream.

The old stage road takes the traveller from the mountain lake around a circuit of curious and interesting scenes. You may behold a giant oak, on which some faint scars represent the inscription cut by Daniel Boone: "Here Daniel Boone killed a bar."

The sweet springs in Monroe County, and a little farther on, Old Crow's tavern, are notable stopping-places. At the latter Daniel Webster, Clay, Calhoun, and many other great statesmen of their time have sat under the trees on a summer's day, and marked the half-hours by juleps brewed by Old Crow, the last of the typical innkeepers, and the biggest liar in all Virginia, politicians not excepted.

The sentimental Waltonian may lounge away his holiday along here with delight; and six miles farther on, at Dry Creek, is another pleasant tavern of the same sort, but more modern and very comfortable—honeysuckles at every window, and the cottage house surrounded with pretty yard and flower garden. A mile westward is the White Sulphur, from which you may hear the terpsichorean revels of fashion, and a mile eastward is "Beauregard," the beautiful estate of Mr. Geo. Grant Peterkin, now occupied by Mr. MacNeil. Both these accomplished gentlemen are Englishmen of means and high social rank, and their estate is one of the most beautiful in this State. The mansion is surrounded by an extensive park of magnificent trees—oak, maple, and buckeye—and overlooks a rich valley, through which meanders a clear stream, spanned here and there with rustic bridges. And in the middle of a velvety meadow is a spring of mineral water, that sends bubbling

from a bed of white sand a fountain copious enough to turn a dozen mill-wheels.

The sweetest dreams of Arcadian happiness must be broken by the dull morning of reality, and as we sat at the table and drank good red wine of France, amid good cheer and good company, the shrill car whistle gave the dreadful *reveille* that broke the charm and took us back to the American capital, where not even a Congressional scandal delighted the ear of gossip, and helped along the stifling heat.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Mutiny.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XXII.—"WHAT A FATE!"

"WHAT do you say, Vaughan? Shall we find some other hiding-place?"

"No," said Vaughan, decidedly, as he endeavoured to conceal from the others the despair that crept over him. "On remaining here depends our rescue. We should be hiding from friends as well as enemies. Patan must be a little time before he can bring a party to take us, and at any minute help may come."

His eyes sought Mabel's, which were dilated, and full of dread; she laid her hands on that which grasped his sword.

"Rob," she whispered, "we shall not be made prisoners again, shall we?"

"Not while I am alive," he returned, in the same tone. "Do not fear, darling; four desperate men are equal to a great many of those cowardly sepoys."

"I am not afraid," said Mabel, though her looks told a different tale, "with you near me. But if they kill you they shall kill me too. If we cannot escape, we will die together."

A groan that would not be repressed broke from Vaughan's breast, and for a minute or two there was silence.

Payne stepped to Dora's side.

"Miss Vaughan," he said, in a tone that reached no ears but hers, "in a few moments, perhaps, we shall be engaged in a struggle for life. A kind word from you will double my strength. Will you not speak it?"

"I am sure it would not," said Dora, with a glance towards where Morley stood a little apart. "You will, I know, do all that is possible, and no words of mine could make you do more."

She moved to her brother's side, and placed her arm round Mabel. Then in silence they waited, but not for long.

The sound of approaching feet was heard, and the major's servant crept forward to reconnoitre. He returned directly, and spoke to Morley.

"Vaughan," said Morley, with the calmness of despair, "there is a company of the enemy advancing upon us, Peter says, guided by that rascally *kelassie*. You had better say your adieux," he continued, bitterly, as he saw the way in which both girls clung to his friend, "for we have not many minutes to live."

However, Morley did not know that a company from the fort was also advancing, and had seen the sepoys coming in the direction, so that it had be-

come a question of which would be first at the grove of trees.

The sepoy had the shorter distance to go, and so were upon the little party, finding out that it was no easy matter to take them prisoners, when the Europeans dashed up.

A sharp but short skirmish ensued, resulting in the retreat of the natives, considerably diminished in numbers; and then the company from the fort, with those they had rescued in their midst, hastened back to the gate.

The enemy made a faint attempt to cut off their retreat, but it was a failure, as they were covered by guns from the walls; and in a very short time Vaughan and Morley were once more in Chutnegunj, worn with fatigue and anxiety, but successful. They were cheered by the men, and heartily welcomed by their brother officers, all of whom had given them up for dead.

Towards evening Colonel Stafford sent for Morley to his tent, and thanked him earnestly for all he had done.

"It is a debt that can never be repaid," he said, in conclusion, with all his habitual stiffness laid aside, while the falter in his voice, and the glistening of his eye, told how deeply he was moved.

"I consider myself privileged to have been of any use to your daughter—and Miss Vaughan," said Morley, lightly; "and, after all, it is Vaughan who deserves all the thanks, not I, for I should have given up a dozen times but for him."

He made a movement as if to go, but the colonel stopped him.

"Stay a moment, Morley. Before you go, I want to say a word to you about Dora."

"Oh, no, colonel, surely not to-night. I am really too tired and done up. Let me repair my defences with a little genuine sleep, and then to-morrow I shall be ready for you to attack me on that or any subject."

His careless laugh displeased the colonel, whose tone was colder when he spoke again.

"But seriously, my dear boy."

"But seriously, colonel, do let me off for to-night, and afterwards you may hold court-martial over my conduct to that young lady, if you like. Have you anything else to say to me, because, if not, I'll go and turn in, early as it is, so as to be ready for my duties to-morrow."

"Nothing," said the colonel, gravely. "Stay, will you send Payne to me?"

"Certainly," said Morley. Then, as a thought struck him, "By Jove, colonel, you're not going to put him under arrest, are you? He was the pluckiest of the three, and, upon my word, I rather think he deserves all the credit."

"He knew what to expect when he became a deserter," said the colonel, quietly.

"But you know what he did?"

"I have heard everything from my daughter."

Morley looked serious, and tried to divine the colonel's feelings; but his face, which had been quivering with mixed emotions a few minutes before, was now stern and impenetrable.

"You won't be too hard on him, though, colonel? Remember, he is hardly more than a boy."

The next moment the young man saw that he was making a mistake, and perhaps doing his friend's cause more harm than good; for the colonel was evidently vexed by what he had already said.

"I will find him at once, and send him here," said Morley, and immediately withdrew.

He went first to Vaughan and inquired for the ensign.

Vaughan had not seen him since they entered the fort.

"In that dress," he said, "one so easily lost sight of him, or took him for a real native, that I could not say when I saw him last. He was splendidly disguised."

"If you come across him, send him to the colonel," said Morley. "I shall go and inquire, though I have not an idea where to go."

"I should advise you to ask the major's servant. He is almost sure to know."

"And where is he to be found?"

"I believe the major has taken possession of him again. At all events, he will probably be with Harland."

Acting on this advice, Morley went straight to the major's quarters. The deep voice of that officer, raised in anger to a sound like thunder, greeted him.

"You scoundrel, you black rascal!—what do you mean by it? How dare you leave me like that, you—"

Whatever the last epithet would have been, it remained unuttered, through Morley's entrance.

"Hallo, major, what's that for?"

Harland, who was in the middle of administering a sound flogging, confronted the interrupter of the course of justice, with a very red face.

"Is this villain my servant, or yours, sir?" he demanded.

"Neither," said Morley, coolly. "I thought he belonged to Harry Payne."

"Then you were mistaken, sir," said the major, wrathfully.

"Well, whoever owns him, I want him just now, if you can spare him. I came to look for him."

"I will send him to you when I've done with him."

"It doesn't matter. I can ask him here what I want to know. But, first, have you seen Payne, major?"

"I! No. The young dog! A pretty mess he's got into. Court-martial, dismissal from the service, and so on, all for the sake of a couple of silly girls, with no more com—"

"I beg your pardon, major; but I am in a hurry. Peter, do you know where Ensign Payne is?"

"Sahib Payne—" began the poor fellow, with a frightened glance at the major.

"Hold your tongue, idiot, and don't speak till I tell you! No, Captain Morley, he does not know where Payne is, and I don't intend him to. He is my servant, and suits me, and I am going to finish punishing him, if you have done with me."

Morley was getting angry, but he still spoke calmly.

"Major Harland, you cannot refuse to let me hear what he knows of the ensign. The colonel wants

him, and I believe your man can tell me where to find him."

"You hear that, villain? What do you know about him?"

"Master dead, sahib," said the native, with tears in his eyes.

"What!" thundered the major. "Who is dead?"

"Sahib Payne."

"Dead!" exclaimed Morley, incredulously. "When? where?"

"The sepoys cut him down, sahib, out there."

"Do you mean to say he wasn't brought in when we were?"

"No, sir. He stand in front of the mem sahibs, and a sepy cut his head with a tulwar. Then he fell on his face, and all the men tread on him. Then all was fight and cry and groan till we were being brought back. I say to the sahibs, 'Is Sahib Payne here? Have you got master?' They say 'Yes, yes.' But when we are in, he is not here."

There was no doubting the truth of this graphic account.

"Are you sure of this, Peter?" asked Morley, though at heart he did not doubt that the man was convinced Payne was no more.

"Yes, sahib."

"Come with me. Major, you must spare him to go with me to the colonel. But first we will see Captain Thomson."

This was the captain whose company had been sent out from the fort, and to him Morley went, followed by the native; for the major had made no further objection to the young man's wishes on that point.

"Let me see," said the captain, in reply to Morley's question. "We brought in the two ladies, Vaughan, and yourself, and a native."

"Are you certain that is all?"

"Certain."

Morley left him abruptly, and turned towards the colonel's departments.

"Poor Harry, poor lad!" he muttered, as a dimness gathered over his eyes; "can it be true that he is gone like this—cut to pieces by those devils? And we left him to their tender mercies, when perhaps he was only wounded. What a fate!"

The colonel heard the native's recital in silence. Supplemented as it was by Morley's repetition of Thomson's words, it left no room for doubt, however unwilling he was to believe.

There was silence for a few minutes as Morley concluded. The colonel, who had been sitting with his head resting on his hand and his eyes on the ground, looked up at last.

"It is the fortune of war," he said, with a sigh. "Another brave lad gone. Well, he is only one among many. Let us hope the poor boy did not live long enough to experience the enemy's ingenuity in tortures."

As he seemed disposed to say no more, but turned his attention to the despatches which he had been writing, Morley said "Good night," and left him.

"You may go, Peter," he said, as they stood together in the compound; and then he wandered about by himself aimlessly, thinking of Payne, and wondering whether his own death would be as quickly

dismissed from the minds of his friends as that of the ensign by the colonel.

"But what can we expect?" he thought. "They fall around us daily, and we do not give them the tribute of a sigh, till it is some one connected with ourselves. And yet each one, perhaps, leaves as great a gap in his own particular circle. The colonel seems to have no feeling; but he is in the right. In war there is no time for grief. I wonder whether she would drop a tear if I fell. I believe so; for so she would for the meanest soldier of them all."

It was growing dark, and Morley leaned against the wall of one of the native buildings in the compound, while he strove to repress the passionate feeling of love for Mabel. As he thought of her gentle, pitying eyes, and sweet, sad face, lifted, as he had last seen it, in perfect trust to Vaughan's, he felt as though reason were about to flee.

"Mabel, Mabel," he groaned, "you will drive me mad! He cannot love you as I do. Oh! why did not I fall instead of Payne? Surely she would have wept for me then."

"Frank, is this you?" A hand was laid on his shoulder.

He recognized Vaughan's voice, but made no reply.

"I have been looking for you," said Vaughan.

"Where do you put up to-night?"

"I have not thought about it."

"That is all right, then. I came to ask you to join me, as Payne doesn't turn up."

"You have not heard, then?" said Morley, abruptly.

"Payne is dead."

"Payne!"

"Yes; he was cut down by a tulwar, and left with the sepoys. The major's servant saw it. I find that he was never brought into the fort, as we imagined."

Vaughan uttered a pained exclamation under his breath.

"Come," he said, after a pause; and he passed his arm through Morley's. "Do not let us stop here."

They walked on side by side, each absorbed in his own thoughts.

"Poor fellow?" said Vaughan, presently, as if speaking to himself. "*Requiescat in pace.* I would rather it had been almost any one else."

"Me, for instance," said Morley. "So would I."

He drew his arm away as he spoke, and Vaughan turned to look at him. It was too dark to see his expression, but the quick, panting breath told of the agitation under which he was labouring.

"Frank," said Vaughan, quietly, "isn't it time this madness was a thing of the past? Be a man, and look at the affair in a reasonable light. From my soul, I am sorry for you."

"I do not want your pity, Robert Vaughan. Leave me alone; I am not myself to-night."

He turned away, and Vaughan stood looking at him, in some hesitation as to what to do. He scarcely liked to leave Morley to himself in his present frame of mind, and yet felt unwilling to say more to him, from a feeling that he was the wrong person to offer comfort.

However, at last he touched him on the arm, and spoke in a matter-of-fact way, as though nothing had passed on any other subject.

"You are tired, old fellow, and so am I. Let's go and get a good night's rest."

"Curse you, Vaughan!" hissed Morley, catching him by the throat. The action was so unexpected, that Vaughan made no resistance; the next minute his head came with a crash against the ground, and he lay there stunned.

Morley stood over him, quivering with rage, when a sudden deafening noise, like a magnified clap of thunder, accompanied by a vivid glare, broke upon the stillness. He was dashed against a wall, lights danced before his eyes, and he knew no more.

CHAPTER XXIII.—"ANOTHER MINE!"

"THERE, Dora, child, for goodness' sake leave off crying. Here you are, safe, for a wonder, after all your adventures; and all the gratitude you show is to sit and cry in that miserable fashion."

It was Mrs. Harland who spoke, for she had come with the benevolent intention of cheering Dora up, and of satisfying her curiosity at the same time.

Her light eyes wandered coldly over the little drooping, dejected figure in an easy chair opposite to her.

"Look at Mabel. She is as busy as possible, nursing her mother, and making herself useful. Why don't you follow her example?"

"I haven't a mother to nurse," said Dora, sadly.

"Oh, how I wish I had!"

"Well, I declare! As if that was anything to make you begin afresh. Have you heard about the explosion last night?"

"No, Mrs. Harland," said Dora, without much interest.

"A great piece of the wa— But first tell me what on earth you have to make you so unhappy?"

"Many things, Mrs. Harland."

"What are they?"

"For one, I am sorry about Mr. Payne. If he had only lived to hear how grateful we are—if I had only said what he asked me; but I spoke so—so coldly, the very last thing, and he must have thought me so ungrateful; and now he is dead, and I shall never—never—"

She broke down, and sobbed passionately, for the excitement and danger she had passed through had unnerved her, so that she had none of that self-command which had sustained her in Ismail's palace.

Some women would have gone to her side and placed a soothing arm round the slight, shaking form, and would have drawn the fair head of the motherless girl to their breast, to comfort her by that sympathy which is expressed in gentle touches more than in words. Not so the major's wife. She had too much common-sense.

She waited till the sobs had almost ceased before she spoke again.

"Silly child! He was nothing to you. Men must be killed when there is fighting going on, and why not he as well as another? What else are you crying for?"

"I cannot tell you. I am weak and stupid, I know. Tell me about the explosion."

"A large piece of the wall was blown up by those wretches. Whatever the men were about not to see

them doing it I can't guess. There were ever so many wounded and burnt, and some killed; and your brother and Mr. Morley, who were out together, were thrown to the ground and stunned."

"Oh, Mrs. Harland! Are they much hurt?"

"I suppose not, as they are both out this morning. Your brother, I believe, is resuming the command of his company. I don't know about Mr. Morley. You are not engaged to him now, are you?"

"No," said Dora, almost inaudibly.

"I congratulate you. He is a very conceited and presuming young man. He interfered yesterday when my husband was punishing his own servant. Not that he said much, but his manner made the major very angry."

"He was quite right," said Dora, energetically. "Indeed, Mrs. Harland, I think the major is too cruel sometimes."

"Nothing could be too cruel for a native. I wonder you can think so after what you have gone through. There are none of them worth a moment's consideration. Make them afraid of you, and they will obey you and be useful. Be kind to them, and they will injure you if possible."

"We were kind to poor Joom, and how faithful he was!" said Dora. "No white man could have done more than he did. Ah, if they had all been treated well, surely this trouble would never have been."

As she spoke there was the roar of the firing of heavy guns plainly heard, and Vaughan entered hastily.

Dora sprang up to meet him.

"Oh, Rob, I am so glad to see you. You were hurt last night, were you not?"

"Slightly," he said, with a little hesitation. "How is Mabel?"

"Very well. She is with Mrs. Stafford, who is ill, you know. But she is getting better fast now. What is all that firing, Rob?"

"You know they mined a part of the wall? Well, they have got three eighteen-pounders into position, and are trying to keep our men from going on with the repairing. There! Listen! There are our batteries replying. But I must be off. I only came to see how you both were."

He hurried away, and Dora stood thoughtfully where he left her, pale and wan, but with the drooping listlessness gone from her manner, while her eyes lit up with an expression that made the major's wife look at her wonderingly.

"What is the matter, child? What are you going to do?"

"To make myself useful," said Dora, with a half-smile.

"Well, I am glad you are beginning to look a little more cheerful. I am going to Mrs. Stafford's room now. Good-bye."

Dr. Miller was hurrying towards his temporary surgery, when he heard footsteps behind him, and, looking round, saw Dora Vaughan following him, escorted by a young officer.

"Thank you," she said to her escort, "I do not need you any longer;" and in an instant she was at the doctor's side, and had slipped her little hand in his arm.

"Well, young lady," said he, as they went on together, "do you require my services? Because, if not, you must not keep me, I have so much to do."

"I did not come to ask for your services, but to offer you mine," said Dora, as they entered the doctor's room.

"Indeed," said he, laughing; but putting together what he had come to fetch, at the same time. "In what capacity?"

"Don't laugh at me, please, Dr. Miller," said Dora, earnestly. "I want to go with you, and help in the hospital."

"You!" exclaimed the little man, his round eyes taking in every detail of the girl's appearance—her white face, and dark-ringed eyes; her wavy golden hair coiled in a soft rich braid low upon her neck; the simple white dress, with its light blue ribbons; and lastly the little, soft, white hands, that looked as though only made for pretty needlework, or to draw sweet strains from piano or harp.

He shook his head decidedly.

"My dear child, you have no idea of the horrors you would see. I should bring you out fainting before you had been there a minute."

"Try me," said Dora entreatingly, "and you will soon see how mistaken you are. I have had a little training in that sort of thing lately, and I was never one for turning faint and sick at the sight of a cut, like some people."

"Now? As you are, do you want to come? You don't look much like a Sister of Mercy, Miss Vaughan."

"I have brought an apron; look here. And here is a lot of lint that Mrs. Stafford has been preparing. As to my dress, does it do the men any good to see their nurses in sombre and gloomy clothes? Now, this will wash. What are you waiting for, doctor?"

"Does your brother approve?"

"I have not asked him, because I know he would not let me. Dr. Miller, can you honestly tell me that another nurse is not wanted?"

The doctor was in general easy to persuade, and Dora gained her wish. Though inwardly doubting much as to its success, he consented to make the experiment, and for the rest of that day Dora assisted him at the bedsides of the wounded and dying.

But though the groans of agony made her lips quiver and her eyes fill, she did not fulfil the doctor's prediction, and faint. He was astonished to find how clever those useless-looking little hands were in arranging bandages, bathing wounds, or in holding him lint or plaister as he required it.

Many a kiss touched them from grateful lips as they came near enough, and though the lips were those of rough, common soldiers, Dora felt that there was no disrespect in the act, and gathered more courage as she felt that her presence was welcome.

One man, whose case the doctor's look had told her was hopeless, held her dress as she was about to leave him.

"They've done for me, haven't they, miss?" he whispered.

Dora hesitated, but her face answered for her.

"Say a prayer for me before you go, miss. I sha'n't be here when you come again."

She murmured something about the chaplain, but the man looked dissatisfied. She had not thought of such a thing being expected of her, and shrank from it; but the eyes fixed on her face imploringly overcame her reluctance, and she knelt down by his side and clasped her hands.

Her voice faltered, but she persevered, and the simple words made more than one pair of eyes moist, for the rooms used as a hospital were full of beds, so that she had many listeners.

"Ask Him to take care of the wife and little uns," whispered the man, as she paused.

Dora obeyed, but her voice trembled more and more, and at last she broke down utterly, and her head sank on to her hands. When she rose, she saw that her patient had turned his face away, so she moved softly to another bed without speaking to him again.

The next day, when she went, a different face greeted her; and the occupant of the next bed, seeing her look, said—

"Ah, he doesn't want you no more, miss. He's lost the number of his mess, poor chap."

"You will let me come again, doctor?" said Dora, as the little man escorted her across the compound after her first day of nursing.

"Oh, yes, certainly, if you want to, now you've seen what it is like. We have very few nurses, and the poor fellows don't get half the attention they really require. But I am afraid the heat will be too much for you."

"When it is, I will come away," she said, quietly, and the doctor was silenced.

Meanwhile the struggle had been going on as fiercely as ever.

The 18-pounders had dealt destruction to those engaged in repairing the breach, the round shot sending the wall to pieces as fast as any attempt was made to raise it; and, though the guns from the fort had prevented a rush being made through the breach by the enemy, they could not silence their fire.

Towards evening, however, the round shot suddenly ceased. The wall then progressed rapidly without interruption. But Colonel Stafford was uneasy.

"I can't make out what this quiet means, Harland," he said, as he and the major went over the fort together. "Mischief, I expect. I was rather afraid of their trying a night attack; but we shall be ready for them, as they have given up firing. But I agree with Chester that those guns must be spiked to-morrow."

"Ought to have been done to-day," growled the major. "It would have saved the lives of a number of good men."

"Vaughan's company shall do it as soon as it is daylight again," said the colonel, who had become more himself now that his causes for anxiety were removed; for Mabel's presence was fast restoring Mrs. Stafford to her usual health. "Vaughan is the very man for the duty—clear-headed and cool."

The tour of examination proving satisfactory, the colonel went to his rooms. He found his daughter

and Dora Vaughan giving Mrs. Stafford, for perhaps the sixth time, a sorrowful account of Payne's endeavours to liberate them, to which she was never tired of listening.

As he entered, the building shook as with an earthquake, and a noise, of the meaning of which the colonel was only too well aware, seemed to petrify him for an instant.

"Another mine!" he exclaimed, and hurried out.

It was another portion of the wall blown up, for the sepoy had been sufficiently artful to attract the attention of the garrison by firing at one part, while they made use of the shelter of some of the houses which were clustered outside the outer wall of one side of the fort, to lay a mine.

The explosion had levelled these houses with the ground, and a large breach was made, towards which the enemy advanced with a rush.

Some of the native buildings in the compound had caught fire, and the flames lit up the scene with a weird and terrible effect, glancing on the grim, determined features of the Europeans as they formed round the opening, opposing a living wall to their enemies; and lighting up the dark, fierce faces of the sepoy as they dashed forward.

Morley received orders to extinguish the fire, which was no very easy matter, as the light wooden erections burned fiercely. His men toiled at it, steaming with perspiration, and apparently making very slow progress, while the struggle raged beside them. The air was filled with the crackling of the flames, mingled with the shouted orders of the English officers, the yells of rage from the sepoy, and the cries and groans of agony from the wounded on both sides, as they fell, to be trampled to death, many of them, by the feet of their own friends, ere they could crawl to shelter.

Numbers of native servants, camp-followers, and others crowded the compound, some of them from the burning houses, and women added their screams of terror to the general tumult.

The enemy were in great number, for as fast as some fell others came on, and at first the men swayed back under the force of their sudden onslaught. However, they recovered themselves, and for a short time there was no yielding on either side.

But this was not to last. A gun was got into position in the rear, loaded with grape. Then the garrison, seeming to give way before their opponents, opened out right and left, and the piece was fired.

The effect was tremendous. The sepoy were so staggered by the unexpected discharge that they fell into confusion. The defenders of the fort, closing up again, drove them out without difficulty, and pursued them for some distance.

Vaughan, meanwhile, was left to guard the breach. As he stood in the rear, binding his handkerchief round a slight cut in the wrist, two men started up from the ground beside him.

As the first one made a cut at him, Vaughan started back, then, recovering himself as the second sprang forward, he delivered a thrust with the point of his weapon, at the same time that one of his men cut down the first of the two.

The result of Vaughan's thrust was that the man gave a gasping sigh, and, reeling forward, fell on his face; but there was a word uttered in that sigh that caught the young officer's ear, and made him start violently. He bent over his fallen enemy, and turned him on his back.

At that moment a sudden flame shot up, and the light revealed his face.

Vaughan staggered back with a horrified exclamation.

"Merciful Heaven! It is poor Payne, and I have killed him!"

Notes on a Delicacy.

THE cold winds and nipping frosts of November, which bring the savoury canvas back to our section, open the season for terrapin also, and in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, in the shallow water beneath the lily-pads, among the roots of sweet flag and rushes, where the terrapins hibernate, they are sought more for profit than for pleasure, and quick sale awaits their arrival in the markets of Washington and Baltimore. There may be ducks in the creeks, and the "honk" of the wild goose may be heard in the waters beyond, but the terrapin hunter pays no attention to them so long as he can rake the diamond-back (*Emys terrapin*, which we read of in "Holbrook's North American Herpetology," but since more properly named by Professor Cope *Malacoclemmys palustris*) from their winter abode beneath the mud, where they go at the beginning of cold weather to await the return of spring, when their torpid conditions end, and they resume the active duties of life. I have written of the juicy canvas back and other toothsome wild fowl of many varieties on these waters; the palatable sheep's-head, always gratifying to appetite; the dainty Spanish mackerel, a welcome dish to every epicurean philosopher; the delicious cygnet and necessary accompaniment, a bottle of good old port; and now the succulent terrapin, its haunts and habits, shall be my theme.

Naturalists seem to have slighted our favourite diamond-back, and I have been able to find but little of its natural history. They have not given the same attention to it that they have to some other members of the *Emyda* family. Away back in Schoeff, who observed it in this country during the Revolutionary war, he being surgeon to a German regiment, I find a very correct plate of the animal, and another in "Holbrook's North American Herpetology," but both have meagre descriptions. Other works on natural history are wanting in their accounts, most authors treating the terrapin in a general manner with the whole turtle family, rather than as a distinct species.

A prime specimen, suitable for the table, should measure about 6½ or 7 inches along the plastron or the lower shell. The females only attain this size, and are therefore the most desirable—a female, or "cow" terrapin, as they are called by dealers, measuring such length, is what is termed a "full count" in the trade—that is, twelve of them count a dozen. Those measuring five or six inches along the lower shell are termed "heifers," and in trade count two

for one, or three for two, so that very often eighteen or twenty-four are given for a dozen, according to size and weight.

The females never exceed nine inches in length, and one of that size is seldom caught; a terrapin measuring nine inches will weigh six or eight pounds, and one measuring six inches about three pounds before cooking. The males or "bulls" have scarcely any marketable value. They are very small, rarely measuring over three or four inches, and under the new law of Maryland cannot be sold if they measure less than five inches; neither can the heifers be sold when under that measurement. This law, enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland at the last session, prohibits any one from taking or catching diamond-back terrapins from the waters of the State between the 1st day of April and 1st day of November in each year, and that no diamond-back terrapin of less size than five inches in length upon the bottom shell shall be taken at any time.

To give a full and readable account of the terrapin trade, how and where they are caught, &c., I visited Baltimore, in which city terrapin *à la Marylande* is a dish as old as the city itself. I was taken in charge by Mr. Robert Rennert, the proprietor of the Rennert House, on Fayette-street, and soon found myself in his cellar among diamond-backs fresh from the Eastern Shore of the Bay, Choptauk River, St. Michael's, and other Maryland waters, where they are numerous. First, he explained the noticeable marks of difference between a superior and inferior terrapin; for the genuine diamond-back is different from the James River or "Slider" specimen, commonly known as "red belly," and some other species which resemble it closely, but do not compare to it in flavour, the former having a rough under-shell of a dark mud colour, while the under-shell of the latter is as smooth as glass and has a red tinge resembling that of the common land tortoise. We next visited dealers in this product of the Chesapeake Bay and its adjacent waters; for there are men in Baltimore who make their living during the winter in this trade, buying them from oyster pungies and other vessels arriving at Baltimore daily, and disposing of them not only in Baltimore, but forwarding them to Philadelphia and New York.

"To what extent do you trade in them?" I inquired of one dealer.

"Why, sir, I have sold as many as 1,000 terrapins here in Baltimore in three days. True, many of them were small, but the small ones are cheaper, and many society people giving parties will have stewed terrapin on the bill, but they do not buy the most expensive ones. The large ones we sell to the first-class restaurants, because they have their reputation to maintain, and will not serve inferior terrapin."

In further reply to my questions the dealer responded as follows:—

"For twenty-five years I have been catching and selling them. When I first commenced, if we received six or eight dollars a dozen for full counts, we were doing well; now we get from 20 to 24 dollars a dozen without trouble, but the terrapin are not as plentiful now as then."

An old fisherman, who had devoted many years

of his life to catching terrapin, was so impressed with their value that he declared to me—

"They is money, sir, they is money. If I had that boat full of terrapin, I would never want any more money."

Various methods of capturing them are employed, and many of the old negroes residing near the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, especially on the eastern shore of Maryland, are experts in the manipulation of drags, rakes, and tongs by which the terrapin is brought from his winter home in the mud. All along the southern coast the fishermen capture them, but the Chesapeake Bay terrapin seem to have the greatest commercial value—I suppose for the reason that they are shipped to the markets of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York immediately after being caught, and are therefore in prime condition. Those caught further south, on the South Carolina, Florida, and Gulf coasts, are sold in the southern markets.

The experiment has been tried in that section of penning the terrapins caught until a sufficient number to ship north could be procured. The pen, covering an area of some two or three acres, in a creek of shallow water, was composed of stakes driven in the mud, and the terrapins, as fast as caught, were put in the enclosure, where they were fed daily with fish, bits of meat, and other things suited to their taste. Although the best care was taken of them, it was soon discovered that the impounded animal became poor, and its flavour, when served at the table, did not compare with those taken at large, and served within a few days thereafter without being impounded. A fact easily explained when we consider that the imprisoned terrapin had not the same choice of food as the one at large, neither had it the same exercise; and, besides, the worry of imprisonment, and constant effort to get out of the enclosure, caused the females to drop their eggs prematurely, and lose flesh as well as flavour.

One device for their capture consists of a drag net arrangement, which scrapes off the mud, allowing it to pass through the meshes of the net, but retaining the terrapin, and crabs too, many of which are scraped out of the mud at the same time. In places where they are closely bedded three or four are often caught at one time in this manner. Another method employed is by sounding for them beneath the mud with a sharpened stick, and upon striking one to rake it up with the tongs. Old fishermen say they can locate them by the bubbles which arise from their nostrils at intervals.

When raked out of their hibernating place, they are, of course, covered with black mud, but they require little or no care. Usually they are tossed into a barrel, and the fishermen claim that they thrive better this way than if scattered over the hold of a vessel or floor of a cellar. In case of bitter cold weather, they are covered with straw, to prevent them from freezing.

Terrapin deposit their eggs in the sand on the beach in June, and generally after rain—for the reason that, the sand being moist, they can make the hole without the danger of the sides falling in. The hole is always made beyond the reach of the tide, and at night, when from twelve to twenty-four

eggs are deposited in the nest, and left for the sun to hatch. The young ones are soon able to care for themselves, and seek the water shortly after they are brought to life. The animal is exceedingly timid, hiding itself upon the least alarm. It is a rapid swimmer, and, unlike other members of its tribe, makes good progress over land, though they rarely leave the water, except to deposit their eggs. They can be easily tracked in early morning from the water to the point where they deposit their eggs, and their nests are often robbed, not only by man, but by various animals.

The eggs found in the female are always served with the terrapin, but in the winter they are, of course, much smaller than in summer, when they are deposited in the sand. In a full-grown female the eggs now are not as large as marbles. They are of a golden yellow, and exceedingly rich. As the time approaches for dropping them they increase in size and are covered with a pliant, parchment-like shell.

When the terrapin first seek winter quarters in the mud, they are in prime condition, and do not become poor until nearly time for them to deposit their eggs in spring. In this respect they resemble the fish creation, growing poor and losing flavour as the eggs ripen, and the time for their deposit approaches. A salmon, for instance, is unfit for table use when filled with ripe eggs, and so with a terrapin; but after attending to the duty of propagating their species they soon fatten again.

The proper cooking of a terrapin is a matter of great importance, and when served upon a chafing-dish with rich eggs, it presents a most tempting appearance.

"Cannot the terrapin be dressed nearly ready for table, and then shipped abroad?" I inquired of Rennert. "Oh, yes," he replied. "I have frequently sent them partly cooked in cans to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and even to Europe. This may be done in very cold weather, but care must be taken in preparing the meat and canning it. I prefer to send them alive, however, and have shipped them to England and France to customers of mine temporarily sojourning in those countries."

In olden times terrapin were roasted in hot embers, and served with butter, pepper, salt, and other seasoning to taste. The old Marylanders always enjoyed the tempting dish, and all along the eastern shore the coloured people delight to tell of the festive occasions when roast terrapin was an attractive dish upon "old massa's" table. Now they are served in a more artistic style, and the cook who has had experience in serving terrapin is master of his profession. It would be useless for me to give the formal recipes for serving them, though Rennert gave them to me—French, English, and various other styles he mentioned, but *terrapin à la Marylande* is the favourite. To him I am indebted for much of the information in this letter. His long experience in serving them and his acquaintance with the dealers have made him quite a naturalist as far as terrapin are concerned, and there is nothing about the animal, its haunts, habits, or manner of serving it when captured, that he is not familiar with.

The Wild Camel.

DURING my recent trip through Turkestan and the northern frontier of China, writes Dr. Finsch, of Bremen, I had the opportunity of collecting some notes relating to the existence of the wild camel, *Camelus bactrianus*. When in St. Petersburg, Colonel Prejevalsky had told me that he was sure of finding the camel wild during his proposed new expedition.

When on the Arcad Mountains, 150 versts above Semipalatinsk, where we had a successful hunt after *Ovis argali*, we became acquainted with Mr. Kamensky, a gentleman who is fitting out a large expedition, half mercantile and half scientific, to China, in order to open the route traversed by Colonel Lassnowsky from Peking to the frontier of China, by Saissan. After reaching the latter place by way of Tschugutschek, conducted by Major Tichanoff, we obtained more notices as to the occurrence of the camel wild. Mr. Harkloff, an intelligent merchant who has long resided in Saissan, and has made many trips into Northern China, told me the following on this subject, mostly based on the reports of native Tanguts, as Mr. Harkloff had never had the opportunity of seeing the wild camel himself:—

"The wild camel has two humps; the size is nearly that of the tame, but it is larger and higher on the legs. It is of a darker colour than the tame, and the white around the nose is much clearer and paler. The wild camel is to be found 250 versts south-east from Saissan, in the district of Kubano, part of the desert of Gobi. In the spring they pair, and the time of gestation is the same as with the tame camel. The Tanguts and Kirgizes hunt the wild camel, and eat its flesh; they also use the hair. It is said not to be shy, and accordingly not difficult to obtain."

Major Tichanoff had also the kindness to inquire on this subject of an intelligent and experienced Kirgiz, who reported as follows:—

"The Kirgizes hunt and eat the wild camel. It is not to be tamed. It lives in the western part of the High Gobi, called Kanaba, about two hundred versts from Saissan. According to an old legend, there was a rich Kirgiz, who had so many horses and camels in his possession that he was unable to take care of them. A great quantity escaped, and the camels became wild. The wild camel is much larger, higher on the legs, and has a much finer and softer wool than the tame kind. It runs faster than the horse. It is of a red-brown colour, darker than the tame. The weight is about 40 to 48 'pud,' and it requires four tame camels to transport the body of a wild one. The voice is not so strong as that of the tame camel. The female produces in February or the beginning of March one calf, rarely two, and bears young every year; whereas the tame camel brings forth only every two years. The flesh of the wild camel is much appreciated by the Tanguts through the Gobi desert to Kuldschen. He had often tasted the flesh, which he found sweeter than that of the tame."

Since the publication of this letter, the anticipations of Col. Prejevalsky, as confided to Dr. Finsch, have been realized. During his third journey in

Central Asia, when he travelled from Kuldja across the Tian-Shan mountains to Lake Lob-Nor and the Altyn-Tag range southward of it, he made various inquiries, and organized several excursions in the hope of meeting with wild camels. Native reports were unanimous in declaring that the most likely place for these animals was the Kum-Tag desert, which stretches away to the north-east between Lob-Nor and the Altyn-Tag mountains. Twenty years ago they were said to have been very common, and the guide affirmed he had seen herds of dozens, and even of upwards of a hundred, together, but that with the increase of the population of Charchalyk and of hunters they had much diminished. A skin is now worth at Lob-Nor ten "tenge," or about 4s. 2d.

John Chinaman.

"JOHN" is still the Californian domestic servant.

He is cook, house-servant, scullery-man, parlour servant, and laundry-man. For a long time he was the only possible servant, and even now probably the greater number of housekeepers employ him in preference to the women who offer themselves for such situations. English matrons, no doubt, think that a domestic servant who never drinks alcoholic liquors, who has no followers, and who does not want to be out of the house on Sunday afternoon, and just when it is most inconvenient to be without him, must be indeed a treasure.

John certainly has his good points as a man-of-all-work; but, lest an association should be formed, with disastrous results, to import Chinese domestic servants into England, I must warn your readers that ladies here complain as much of John's peculiar failings and faults as an English lady does of those of her maids. A bright, active, intelligent Chinaboy may be engaged at from £1 4s. to £2 a month wages, besides board; but when he has been trained, and has learnt a little English, he wants his wages raised, for a competent Chinese servant of good character commands from £3 to £4, and even £5 a month, in addition to his board.

A large number also find employment in the laundries kept by their countrymen, and of which there will be seen at least one in every block of houses, or square of say one hundred and fifty yards in the city, and in each of these little shanties from eight to a dozen Chinamen are constantly at work ironing and "damping" the clothes by taking a mouthful of water from the basin on the ironing table and blowing it out in a fine spray over the linen. At this monotonous toil they may be found from daylight until long after midnight; for, if the Chinaman has not the strength of the white man, he will labour with tireless perseverance, and in his shop, or when engaged on piece-work, will continue at a task for fourteen or fifteen hours a day.

The Chinese also here do all the work which is, I believe, in England technically called slop-making. They have learned to use what they call the "needle-machine," and in a walk through the Chinese quarter one may see more than a dozen shops in which some twenty to thirty men are "running"

sewing-machines and making-up trousers, overalls, and other garments for the ready-made clothing dealers.

Roughing it in the Country.

AS a child the cottage girl "roughs" it in the road and in the fields. In winter she learns to slide, and to endure the cold and rain, till she often becomes what, to any one accustomed to a more delicate life, seems positively impervious to weather. The servants in old-fashioned farmhouses really did not seem to know what it was to feel cold. Even nowadays, a servant fresh from an outlying hamlet, where her parents probably could procure but little fuel beyond what was necessary for cooking, at first cares not an atom whether there be a fire in the kitchen or not. Such girls are as hardy as the men of their native place. After a time, hot rooms, and a profusion of meat and good living, generally saps and undermines this natural strength. Then they shiver like town-bred people.

The cottage child is often locked out by her parents, who go to work and leave her in charge of her still smaller brothers and sisters. They play about the hedges and ditches, and very rarely come to any harm. In autumn their little fingers are employed picking up the acorns fallen from the oaks, for which the farmers pay so much per bushel. In spring is their happiest time. The joy of life—the warm sunshine and pleasant breeze of spring—is not wholly lost upon them, despite their hard fare, and the not very affectionate treatment they receive at home.

Such a girl may then be seen sitting under a willow beside the brook with her charges around her—the little brother that can just toddle, the baby that can but crawl and crow in the green fresh grass. Between them lies a whole pile of flowers—dandelion stems made into rings, and the rings joined together so as to form a chain, rushes plaited, blue bells, cowslips tied up in balls, and cowslips loose, their yellow petals scattered over the sward. The brook flows murmuring by, with an occasional splash, as a water rat leaps in, or a fish rises to an insect. The children weave their flowers and chant some old doggerel rhymes with little or no meaning. Long afterwards that girl will retain an unconscious memory of the scene, when, wheeling her employer's children out on some suburban road, she seeks a green meadow and makes a cowslip ball for the delighted infants.

In summer they go down to the hay-field, but dare not meddle with the hay, which the bailiff does not like to see disturbed. They remain under the shadow of the hedge. In autumn they search for the berries, like the birds—nibbling the hips and haws, tasting crabs and sloes, or feasting on the fruit of a hazel-bush. Be it spring or summer, autumn or winter, wherever the child may be, her eyes are ever on the watch to find a dead stick or a broken branch, too heavy to lift, but which may be dragged behind, in order to feed the cottage fire at night.

That is her first duty as a child; if she remains in the hamlet that will be her duty through life, and

to the last, as an age 1 woman. So in London, round the purlieus of buildings in course of erection—even in the central thoroughfares, in busy Fleet-street—children hang about the temporary boardings, and pick up the chips and splinters of deal. But the latter have not the pleasure of the blue-bells and cowslips, nor even of the hips and haws, not does the fresh, pure breeze play upon their foreheads. Rough though it be, the childhood of the cottage girl is not wholly without its recompenses, not the least of which is sturdy health.

Now that good schools are open in every village, so soon as the children are old enough to walk the distance—often considerable—they are sent off every morning. At all events, if it does nothing else, it causes the mothers to give them a daily washing and tidying up, which is in itself an advantage. They travel under the charge of the girl; often two or three such small parties join company, coming from as many cottages. In the warmer months the lanes and fields they cross form a long playground for them, and picking flowers and searching for birds'-nests pass away the time. In winter they have to face the mire and rain.

Smoking out a Tiger.

THE outer cave was quite open in front, and seven feet high at the outside. From the cave the hill sloped sharply down, covered with trees and bushes.

Some of the Bheels advanced to the mouth of the inner cave, and, looking in, saw one eye of the creature, like a ball of fire, at the far end of the den.

We endeavoured to get a shot, but owing, I suppose, to some projecting piece of rock, we never could see both eyes at once, and two shots which I fired in were without effect.

Meanwhile the Bheels had collected a large bundle of grass and sticks, which we rolled up to the entrance of the inner cave, and having set fire to it, we all withdrew to the mouth of the outer to watch the result. There was a most thorough draught into the cave, and the flame was swept into it, but the beast made no sign, and at length the fire died down.

We then had another large bundle of dry grass made up, but this time we mixed it with green leaves. On this being fired, a dense, black smoke arose, and was carried into the cave. It was such that we thought no beast could live in it; but again the fire died out, and, though the inner cave was filled with smoke, its tenant made no attempt to come out.

We had just made up our minds that he had died in the hole, when, from the inner cave, came a sudden rush of smoke, as if driven out by something advancing rapidly. We stood ready, and the next instant, through the embers of the fire, came—not a hyæna—but a large tiger, charging blindly with savage growls.

Hayward carried a short rifle, with a ball of some three ounces in weight, and I had a double rifle of fourteen bore.

In the instant that elapsed between the tiger's emerging from the smoke and his reaching the en-

trance of the outer cave, he was struck by the three balls. Two had taken him through the shoulder, and one through his loins, disabling his hind quarter.

As he fell we could have placed our guns on his head—too near, in fact, to be pleasant. Our followers behaved with great steadiness, and at once handed us our second guns.

The tiger, though disabled, was very savage, and had plenty of life in him, and crunched the underwood savagely. After some time, we gave him his quietus, and carried him home to the camp.

The Careless Shot.

THIS person is a very uncomfortable neighbour. His eccentricities are quite as dangerous as the mistakes of the inexperienced; but they proceed from another cause—want of care.

This is the man who pulls his gun through a hedge on full-cock, with the muzzle towards himself, or pushes it through with the muzzle towards his friends. He habitually forgets or omits to draw his cartridges at lunch time, and frequently takes his gun loaded into the house. If his gun is pinfire, he takes an opportunity, when the party is squatting at lunch, as close as a covey in a grass-field at night, to demonstrate that he can explode a cartridge, without causing the slightest damage, by hammering the pin with a stone. He never takes the trouble to ask or look to see where the other guns are posted, and accordingly rakes them right merrily when a bird comes in their line. He is usually a genial, light-hearted creature, and all the more irrepressible on that account. If he nearly shoots a man, he takes the first word and rallies him cheerily—"I thought I had you there, sir!" "You had a squeak for it that time, old man," and so forth; while his victim is speechless with rage and terror.

If he is not within sight you are left in no doubt as to the scene of his labours; for frequent cries of "Let them rise, sir!" and "Take care where you fire!" mingled with oaths, ascend from the spot. He is almost incurable—but he is not brutal; and if he has the misfortune to hit a man badly, he not improbably will give up shooting—for a time.

If you meet him a year or two later, you will find him blazing away as carelessly as ever, and, in all likelihood, the guest of the man he shot.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

APROPOS of lentils—which are supposed to have formed the staple of Jacob's pottage, which he sold to hungry Esau, and which somebody has lately been advocating for food—in Egypt the lentils are threshed out in the open field on the hard ground, thrown up into large heaps, and there left until conveyed into the towns, or on board ship. Hence the dirty state they come in. Lentils are highly esteemed in this country for cattle-feeding, when cheap enough; but of late years the supply has fallen off, the cultivation of cotton in Egypt paying much better. Egyptian lentils, however, when cleansed by sifting, winnowing, and washing, and splitting through a mill, to get rid of the husks, form an excellent article of food for soups.



The Agate Cross.

CHAPTER IV.



I HAD again been a sojourner in the great metropolis for a few weeks, and, having concluded and shipped my business purchases, had again a short time to devote to pleasure. This time, however, I was contented to enjoy myself amid scenes of innocent and harmless amusement.

No great billiard matches tempted me now. My fright had cured me of that completely, and had, indeed, implanted within me a most decided distaste for the game.

I was not at all curious with regard to low life—that is, underground life—and was satisfied with knowing only so much of the world as was intended to be public for the eye and ear of everybody, and that in broad daylight.

Gaslight, with its brilliancy, had lost its attractions after nine o'clock, and I was contented, as it was possible for me to be away from home and loved ones, in the presence of kind and cordial friends, and in the higher classes of theatrical amusements.

Edwin Booth received a large share of my enthusiasm; in fact, so large a portion that I had scarce any to spare for other artists or entertainments. Lester Wallack's "Rosedale" was having a great run at that time, and I enjoyed it exceedingly, especially the beautiful moonlight effects. Nevertheless—never to my shame be it spoken—I was homesick, wholesomely homesick after wife, Alice, and—the new baby, and looked forward anxiously to the day the steamer was to start in which I had secured a passage.

The last day before the one on which I was to start for home (Monday) I spent in hunting up little nicknacks for the children's pleasure, and in purchasing a handsome gift for my wife; and, with my bundles under my arm, was wending my way to the hotel, when a light touch on my arm arrested my steps.

I turned, and saw an officer with the well-known star on the breast of his coat, who requested me to accompany him.

Very strongly tempted to rebel, I yet restrained

myself, and, in as dignified a manner as possible, suggested to him that he had mistaken the person; to which he replied by telling me I was only wanted for a short time, and showed me his warrant for detaining me.

Useless all resistance, so I followed passively where he led, and was surprised to be taken, not to a prison, but to a neat brown-stone house, up-town, ushered into a parlour, and requested to be seated.

Here I waited but a short time, when a gentleman entered who introduced himself to me as Lawyer D—, and expressed regret at being obliged to use so summary a proceeding toward me, but stated as the reason that he had only within a few hours discovered my intended departure the next day, and he desired me to see and testify with regard to certain articles and papers which he had in his possession.

He first handed me a note, which to my surprise I discovered to be the one which I had written to the chief of the police so long ago. I told him my knowledge of it, and at his request related my adventure, which he rapidly committed to paper, and gave me to sign. He then showed me the leaves of my memorandum which Mrs. Whitlock had taken, and the dirk-handle, all of which I identified.

Half an hour's conversation with him removed our reserve, and he told me of the manner in which they had entrapped the assassin of George Whitlock.

Mrs. Whitlock was ill, confined to her bed, he said, for the time, by the excitement she had undergone; but, having no doubt that she would be better by morning, she requested me (as the vessel did not sail until three o'clock p.m.) to accompany her to the cell of Albert Whitlock, in the morning, at nine o'clock a.m. I, of course, expressed my perfect willingness to do so; and then, as the lawyer said I was at liberty, arose to take my leave, leaving, however, a message for Mrs. Whitlock, expressive of my sympathy, and stating that, if I could benefit her in any way, I would be happy to postpone my journey.

The next morning, promptly at the time appointed, I made my appearance at the house of our quondam governess, and was received again by Lawyer D—. I had only waited a few moments, however, when Mrs. Whitlock entered, and expressed her gratification at seeing me. She inquired after my wife and little Alice, as in politeness bound, and then suggested starting immediately for our place of destination.

She looked pale and worn, and dark circles were around her eyes, bearing evidence that sleep had not visited her for several nights; but she was calm and ladylike as usual, and told me herself, in a quiet, subdued tone, of the arrangements and preparations that had been made for the interment of

her husband's body on that same afternoon in Greenwood.

The cross of agate she had already sent to her husband's brother, as she had, she said, a presentiment that she should not live long to take care of it. She smiled wanly as she told me this.

We took a close carriage, and were driven to the prison where Albert Whitlock was confined. Here we were detained a short time, and then admitted to his cell.

As we entered, he was sitting with his head bowed upon his hands. He took no notice of our entrance, not even lifting his eyes, until the voice of his cousin Julie aroused him.

"Albert," she said—"Albert, this afternoon the body of your cousin and my dear husband, whom you foully murdered, is to receive a Christian burial; and I cannot follow him to the grave without having first expressed to you my forgiveness. Tardy it is; but for the first time since I discovered his death, and the cruel manner of it, womanly feelings again have a place in my bosom. What I am to-day is what I was when you first knew me; what I have been since I arrived in New York, as the sworn avenger of his blood, is beyond even my own comprehension. I sometimes think I must have been insane, in my mad craving for your destruction. But the evil is done, and vain would be my wishes to undo it. Forgive me, now, the evil I have done you, as I forgive you the deed which has wrecked my happiness in this world—perhaps my hopes of the next."

"Forgive you, Julie!" he hissed, rather than spoke. "Forgive you, for making use of my idolatrous love to your person to destroy me—for mocking me with a false love—never! By what base arts you have made yourself mistress of my secrets I suppose I shall never know. I have discovered that the two detectives were in your employ, and they may have been the partial means of your knowing; but much that has aided to entrap me into my present position could have come only from my vile partner, Julian Estange. I was obliged to admit him into some of the secrets of the place, but what connection he can have with you or your emissaries, perhaps" (sneeringly) "you had rather not have known. If I only had the rascal in my power—But he knows how to take care of his precious, delicate self. He has not, and will not, probably, come near me while—"

"He is here," said Mrs. Whitlock, coolly; and, taking off her velvet round hat, disclosed her dark curling hair parted to one side, then taking from her satchel a heavy black moustache, she raised it to her face, and Don Julian stood revealed, all save the dark swarthy colour, which had been effected by the stain from the root of a herb.

The prisoner started to his feet with an oath, gazed at her steadily and silently for a moment, then a singular smile broke over his face, disclosing his white teeth gleaming like those of some wild animal, and he said—

"Julie, you are an admirable strategist, but I believe the surprise has unnerved me, and I would beg to be excused from further company this morning. Before you depart, though, cousin Julie, I will

shake hands with you, in answer to your request of a short time since."

Deceived by his manner, Julie dropped her mask and went toward him with outstretched hand.

He grasped it, drew her nearer, and then, with one quick motion, drew a concealed knife from his sleeve and plunged it into her heart. She fell to the floor, and as we, overwhelmed with horror, rushed forward, he repeated the action upon his own person and sank beside her.

Julie was dead, beyond all hope. Albert lingered a few hours in utter silence. No question, no request could make him speak one word, until, as he drew his last dying sigh, it sounded like: "Forgive—Julie!" The tragedy of three lives was ended.

THE END.

Jack Fishing in Winter.

THE jack, or pike, as he is now indiscriminately called—for modern fishermen generally seem to have given up the practice of their ancestors of denominating a fish under 5 lbs. by the former, and over 5 lbs. by the latter name—is *par excellence* the winter fish among the ordinary brethren of the angle who are not in a position to indulge in casting the fly for trout and salmon, which commenced this month in some rivers. True, that the jack, like the perch, will occasionally take an artificial fly in the summer and autumn months; but it is only by way of experiment that any sober fishermen would thus dream of trying for him, to test the accuracy of angling authors in their recommendations of some huge gaudy representation of an impossible insect, and to while away an idle hour. True, also, that in the summer months, and "pity 'tis 'tis true," the trailed gyrating spoon-bait and the weed-searching gorge will cause the slaughter of any number of small, inexperienced, and half-educated fish, in a lanky, discoloured, miserable, and uneatable condition; but no fisherman deserving of the name ought to think of jack fishing in earnest before the 1st of November, when his quarry is in good flesh and fettle.

All the winter months are good for this sport, and jack will "run" even in a hard frost when you can find open water for your bait, or make it by breaking the ice. Not that under such circumstances jack fishing is particularly enjoyable, even to the most enthusiastic angler, when your line assumes the rigidity of a moderately pliable length of wire, and freezes, if not kept in motion, to the rings of your rod, and icicles are apt to form on your bamboo, if not on your moustache or whiskers; still, you may kill your jack with the thermometer considerably below freezing point, and congratulate yourself that you are not a feather-bed fisherman and a fair-weather sportsman.

All angling books to the contrary, and the tradition that the temperature can hardly be too low for successful jack fishing, the experience of most modern practical anglers goes to show that during the winter months moderately fair and mild weather is the most suitable for the sport; and, further, that on the bright days of the present month, when the temperature is comparatively high, the largest fish

and the largest takes are generally had. Indeed, the first fortnight in February is perhaps the best fortnight in the season, taking one year with another, for the sport in question; and it continues good till the end of the month, though in forward—i.e., mild—seasons the fish are so far advanced in spawn by St. Valentine's Day that it is a pity to capture them after that date.

This year, after the long frosts, anglers may fish on without any qualms of conscience even to the 15th of next month, as permitted in "open" waters by the provisions of Mr. Mundella's Bill of last session; but when further legislation takes place in reference to "coarse" fresh-water fish, it would be well that the close time for jack should be from St. Valentine's Day to the end of September or October.

Esox Lucius—this is the classical or "natural history" name of our fish. The *Esocidae*, or pike, are a large and widely-distributed family; but our jack is the only representative of it in British fresh waters, and a very characteristic representative too. His origin and genealogy is involved in some obscurity, and it is difficult to identify him with the *Esox* of Pliny, or (Elian's *Oxyrhynchus* ("sharp-snout"), or any other similar fish of respectable antiquity; and, indeed, among old writers it would appear that the Latin poet Ausonius, in the fourth century, is the first of whom we can certainly say that he speaks of our *Lucius*. Thus (as translated) he sings of him—

"The wary Luce, 'midst wrack and rushes hid,
The scourge and terror of the scaly brood."

This is a true description. With his villainous and cruel aspect (though beautifully marked mottled jacket, gleaming with silver and gold), his wicked eyes so placed in his head that he can best see his prey swimming above him, his ponderous jaws and cavern-like mouth, armed with strong sharp teeth and a very phalanx of bristling "pikes" pointing downwards towards his throat—suggesting painfully that they may all hope abandon who enter there—well may he be called a "terror." He does not belie his character or varied nomenclature. "The Nimrod of the streams," as we find him entitled in "The Innocent Epicure" (1697), is almost too mild a personification of him. Better Pope, who stigmatizes him as "the tyrant of the watery plains."

Ichthyologically the jack is certainly an interesting fish, and to his credit it should be noticed that in his connubial capacity he does not keep a select harem, like the pugnacious stickleback, nor, like most other fish, indulge in polygamy. He has but one wife, and pairs with her some time before the spawning season, is assiduous in his attentions, and altogether a model husband. When one of the pair happens to be taken, the disconsolate widow, or widower, will hang about the spot for many days, a fact which often leads to the capture of the survivor. Last season, a gentleman fishing at Virginia Water hooked a "she pike," as Izaak Walton calls the jackess, and as he was playing and bringing it towards the bank, another fish persistently followed it, sometimes actually touching it. The ultimate result was that the landing-net secured the devoted

follower, which proved to be a male fish about the same size as the female, and doubtless was her husband.

The longevity of the pike is remarkable, the famous fish whose skeleton is in the Museum at Manheim being credited with a life of two and a half centuries; but as there seems to be a good deal of discrepancy about the history of this monster, it must not be taken for granted that the average of pike live to anything like this age, though they are probably the most long-lived of our fresh-water fish. Their tenacity of life, too, like that of the perch, is very great; and in wet grass, or laid on a cold slab, they will often retain vitality for twelve hours and more. Their ferocity and voracity is unquestionable. They can bite, and that with tremendous power of jaw, as more than one unwary or clumsy fisherman has found out to his cost, when handling them after capture. They will then snap at the hand or foot, or, indeed, anything in proximity to them. There are numerous recorded instances of their having deliberately attacked children and grown men when bathing.

The voracity—or, as it may be called, the omnivoracity—of the jack is even more marked than his ferocity. There is hardly anything living which comes amiss to him—ducklings, waterfowl, rats, dead puppies and kittens, garbage in infinite variety, and the members of the finny tribe, supplying his capacious larder. He even contradicts the assertion that "Like spares like;" for he takes one of his own relatives as readily as any other fish. He is said, however, to spare sticklebacks, because of their spines, and to decline the perch because of its back fin being rather awkward in performing an act of deglutition; though those who fish Slapton Lea well know that almost the only baits used for jack in that water are perch with their back fins cut off.

But this, after all, must be put to the credit of the jack's observation and astuteness. He is said also to spare the tench, "the physician of fishes," according to tradition; but the statement, perhaps, is questionable. Certain it is, however, that he has the good taste to abhor a toad, though a frog is very much to his liking, as testified to by Dame Juliana Berners in the first work written on angling in our language (1486 A.D.), nearly two centuries before Walton gave the oft-quoted instructions how, when fixing a frog on a hook, the fisherman should handle him "as though he loved him."

Moreover, as the pike has the voracity of a shark, so he possesses the digestion of an ostrich, or, say, of a cod. When four or five years old, a jack will eat in a week half his weight in small fish; and a learned German has just given us the result of an experiment with two small jack about five inches in length, to the effect that they ate one hundred and twenty-eight minnows on the first day, one hundred and thirty-two on the second, and one hundred and fifty on the third, and that they increased one inch in length in forty-eight hours.

Certain it is that, with plenty of food and in suitable water, jack increase in weight very fast. In some Continental countries they grow to an immense weight, the Manheim pike aforesaid being

put at 350 lbs. We have no such monsters in our waters, our largest fish not reaching a fifth of that weight. Occasionally, however, from secluded waters in the west of Ireland and Scotland, pike scaling over 60 lbs. have been taken, while many between 40 lbs. and 50 lbs. are on record. Norfolk produces fish between 30 lbs. and 40 lbs., and one over 50 lbs. has been taken in Whittlesea Mere. A 35 lbs. fish was taken in a net from one of the lakes on the royal property at Windsor four years ago, and he still lives in a glass case, and his cast is at Mr. Buckland's museum.

Private waters in England produce pike up to 30 lbs.; but it is not often that one over 25 lbs. is caught in such rivers as the Thames and Trent. Fish of this weight have, however, been captured within recent years in the Henley, Marlow, and Maidenhead district; and a few days ago one of over 18 lbs. "bit gimp," in the water above Oxford.

We may take for granted, also, that there are still in the Thames as large fish as were ever taken out of it; and, indeed, several Brobdingnagian jack are individually known in the waters—one, for instance, who has his lair at Penton Hook, and another at Walton—both of which have more than once broken away, to the loss of the fisherman's tackle and temper. Maybe some skilful or lucky angler will account for them both this February, and so disprove the allegation of the ironical Eastern proverb which says that "the biggest fish is always the one that was not caught." However, a Thames jack fisherman—and, indeed, a fisherman in any of our English waters—may always be well pleased with a 12 lbs. fish, as even such are few and far between.

When jack were introduced into this country is uncertain; but it is pretty clear, from the old books on angling, that our fish was the chief and most prized quarry among the earlier generations of anglers. "Live-baiting" and "trolling" were the methods used in jack fishing from the beginning, as the treatise of Dame Juliana Berners, already alluded to, Nobbe's "Complete Troller," published in 1682, and other works in the voluminous literature of the angle, bear witness. These methods are among those practised now, and are substantially the same, though they have been gradually refined upon and improved, as jack have gradually become educated and more difficult to capture.

Live baiting, when the jack has to be given time to gorge, is but tame sport, comparatively speaking, and only differs from trimmering in the fact that the "bung" is attached to a rod instead of floating about and, as it were, fishing itself. A vast improvement on this is "snap" live-bait fishing, which constantly engages the attention of the angler, who must strike the fish immediately he runs the bait. It has the further advantage of not necessitating, as ordinary live-baiting does nine times out of ten, the destruction of under-sized fish, which can generally be released from the hooks and dismissed to grow larger.

Spinning must be allowed to be the most scientific of all styles, as certainly, with the improvements made on the old flights of triangles by Mr. Pennell and Mr. Francis, it is the most deadly. A dace, from its configuration, or large gudgeon, are the best

baits, but they need not spin so mathematically correctly as baits used in spinning for large trout. Indeed, not a few jack fishers maintain that a "wobbling" has more attractions for *Esox* than a straightly-spinning bait. As to the pace at which the bait should be drawn through the water, authorities differ, some drawing it more quickly than others. It seems, however, that on some days and in some states of the water a comparatively quick spin is more efficacious than a slow, and *vice versa*. As a rule, when the water is discoloured, the more slow spin is the better.

As to the style, too, as it may be called, there is a difference of opinion and practice, some keeping up a uniform pace without pauses from the beginning to the end of each cast, others making a succession of draws or sweeps, aided partly by a movement of the rod, and gathering in the line between each. The best advice to anglers is to be master of all styles, and to try the various methods, to see which suits the fish best on each occasion.

A style of jack fishing which has come into vogue of late years on the Thames and elsewhere may be called "dragging." A lead is fixed on the end of the line, and a little above it one or two single hooks on gimp, on which the bait is fixed by the upper lip. This is virtually a paternoster; and being worked gradually along the bottom is often found a very efficacious way of searching deep water, especially in very cold weather.

The jack can hardly be said to be a strong or bold fighting fish. He has nothing like the muscular power of a trout or barbel, or the determined pluck of either; and the larger he gets the more sluggish he is in resistance to capture. Indeed, a big jack seems to trust more to his dead weight than to vigorous effort.

A word or two on *Esox Lucius* from a gastronomic point of view. Our forefathers thought highly of jack, and in the reign of Edward I. the price of this fish in market was double that of a salmon, and ten times that of the best sea fish. In Edward III.'s time jack were carefully kept and fed in stew ponds. We read in Chaucer commendations of the fowl and fish kept in stock by the rich—

"Full many a fair partrich had he on mewe,
And many a brome (bream) and many a *luce* in stewe."

In Henry VIII.'s time we read that jack "fetched as much again as house lamb in February, and a very small pickerel was dearer than a fat capon;" and it is plain that for many generations pike figured on the *menus* of the Royal table on all grand occasions, and of civic banquets in London and elsewhere, while they formed a favourite dish of high ecclesiastical dignitaries.

There has, however, been a great change in the public taste since those days; and though there are still not a few persons who hold that a jack of about five or six pounds, when well in season, is excellent, the very great majority of those whose opinion on things eatable and drinkable is thought worth noting emphatically declare that it is a fish unfit to be served at all. Plenty of rich gravy and skilfully compounded stuffing will make almost anything eatable, and it is more than probable that our fore-

fathers, whose tastes were certainly not very nice or discriminating, were reconciled to jack, as to other fresh-water fish, by its accompaniments.

The variety and complicated character of the recipes found in cookery and angling books for dressing jack suggest a suspicion that the fish requires a good deal of mageiric manipulation to make it palatable. Walton, for instance, fills up more than two pages in the first edition of his "Compleat Angler" in giving instructions how to transform a jack by cooking into "a dish of meat too good for any but anglers or very honest men," and we find the recipes followed in the royal kitchens as given in the Sloane MSS. equally complicated. It must be bad material to start with that requires to be dealt with so laboriously.

Those who enjoy jack are to be envied perhaps rather than declaimed against, as they have one more epicurean pleasure than most other men. And it must be admitted that there are jack and jack. A fish from a small stagnant pond can only be described as filthy, with a jacky odour and flavour about it which all who have once experienced will never forget. One from a clear river is a very different thing indeed. Horsea and Medway pike were considered by our forefathers before all others; but now probably most jack-eaters would agree that the Thames, as it produces the best perch—and, indeed, the best specimens of most other fish—produces the best flavoured jack.

Fire and Sword.

A Tale of the Indian Hunting.

BY JOHN GRAY.

CHAPTER XXIV.—"CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?"

VAUGHAN placed his hand on Payne's heart. There was still a slight pulsation. As he did so, the ensign opened his eyes.

"You've done for me, Vaughan," he said, faintly, just as the flame which had shown who it was that bent over him died down into darkness. "Never mind, old chap. Tell the colonel the deserter spiked the enemy's guns, and tell—"

His voice died away in a groan, and he lay again without motion.

"Here," said Vaughan, to two of his men, "bring a litter and carry him into the hospital."

As they lifted him, the flickering light showed a dark stain, saturating Payne's white cotton clothing. The young officer shuddered as he saw it, and for an instant he felt faint and sick. He made an effort, however, and overcame the sensation, when he found that one of the men was addressing him.

"Taint no manner o' use, sir," he said. "He's as dead as a herring."

"Do as I tell you," said Vaughan, sharply; "and ask Dr. Miller to look to him at once."

The litter was borne away, and Vaughan stood like one in a dream, trying to realise what had happened in the space of the last few minutes. Payne, whom he had thought dead, had returned to receive his death wound from the hand of a friend. The fact that he had dealt that wound to the gallant lad to whom he owed so much weighed upon him, till

he felt ready to forget duty, his position, and all that depended on him, and following Payne, to remain by his side as long as there was the faintest possibility of life lingering in his frame.

Morley's efforts were at last rewarded by the gradual diminution of the fire; the confusion insensibly decreased, those of the natives who could do so returning to their quarters, and the excitement generally calming down in a great measure.

Those of the garrison who had made the sortie returned in triumph, having dispersed the attacking party so successfully that there was no fear of anything else being attempted that night. Repairs commenced, the wounded were taken into the hospital, and Vaughan received the unwelcome orders that his company was to see after the burial of the dead.

The next day, when Dora resumed her self-imposed duties among the sick and wounded, she found that their numbers were sadly increased. Mary Davis was already moving quietly about among the beds, mitigating the suffering of the poor fellows as far as she could, and with words and looks of sympathy cheering and encouraging them.

The surgeons were almost distracted with the amount of work they had on their hands—far more than they could perform. Dr. Miller relieved his mind by grumbling to Dora as she followed him, and assisted in every way in her power.

"As though there weren't enough already," he said, "they must needs send in natives. Friends, indeed! There isn't one among them whose heart, in my opinion, isn't as black as his face. Have you your scissors? Ah, that's right. Now clip all this hair off quickly. Hold up, my lad. It will be done directly."

Dora lingered a minute with this patient, and then followed the little man to the next one.

"There," muttered the doctor, as he examined this one, a native—"not only have I got niggers sent in, but niggers whom a dozen surgeons couldn't cure. I shan't disturb him. Better let the poor wretch die in peace, without bothering him with sewing up and bandaging when it could do no good."

He was moving away, when Dora bent over the unconscious man, whose face was turned from her. The next instant she started back, with a faint exclamation.

"I knew that would be it," muttered the doctor. "Come, my dear, let me take you out. This is not a place for you, but you would come."

"Don't you see, doctor?" said Dora, without heeding his words. "It is Mr. Payne."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the doctor, immediately taking a closer look. "I thought I had seen the face somewhere. That's the second time he's taken me in. Poor lad! poor lad!"

He raised the young man's arm, and laid it down again, shaking his head sadly, while Dora watched him with anxiety.

"Oh, Dr. Miller, he won't die, will he? Surely, he has not escaped so far to be brought here to die before our eyes? Oh, pray, pray, save him!"

She caught his hand imploringly in her own,

looking at him as though he had it, indeed, in his power to restore the young ensign to life.

"It is hopeless," he said, slowly. "Well, I will do what I can for him; youth and a good constitution will sometimes work wonders."

As he spoke he was already busy about Payne's wounds—a nasty cut on the head, which had been roughly bandaged, and a sword-thrust through the shoulder.

"Ah," said the doctor, as he finished the dressing, during which the patient had been quite insensible, "if that thrust had been an inch or so lower, he would have been dead hours ago. As it is—"

Whenever she could during the remainder of the day Dora returned to this bed, always finding Payne awake, but delirious. At first this startled her, but by degrees she became used to it, and ceased to wonder that his eyes could rest on hers without a spark of recognition. To her it seemed that even this was a better sign than that dull stupor which seemed so like death.

It was growing dusk, when there was a quick, firm tread behind her, as she held water to the lips of one poor fellow, whose wounds had brought on an intolerable thirst, and who was powerless to raise himself, or to lift the cup to his mouth.

"Let me help you," said Morley's voice, and he passed his arm gently under the man's shoulders, and held him while he drank, afterwards laying him down again and watching Dora as with a trembling hand she smoothed the pillow, and with little touches added to the patient's comfort.

"I hear," said Morley, "that Payne was not killed after all, but that he is here, badly wounded. I came to see how he is. Where shall I find him?"

"This way," said Dora, and she glided before him between the rows of beds.

"He must be moved," Morley said, as he followed. "I will get rooms for him. I wonder any one can recover in this fearful place with the air full of groans of pain."

Dora stopped the next minute by Payne's bedside.

"He could not be moved at present, Mr. Morley. He is worse than you think."

"How are you, Payne?" said Morley, softly, as he took the hot hand, burning with fever, in his.

Payne murmured something, and Morley stooped to catch the words. It was a fragment of the song that haunted Marmion's dying moments, and Morley started and looked at his companion.

"Delirious!" he exclaimed, and then a deep flush rose to his brow, as he wondered whether Dora had heard. He turned quickly to Payne again.

"Don't you know me, old fellow?"

"Tell the colonel I spiked the guns, and tell—"

He stopped, and for a minute both Morley and Dora thought that consciousness had returned. They waited for what was to follow.

"And it has all been of no use," said the ensign, in a despairing tone. "I am to die, and they will be captive again, after all."

He turned away his face, as though even then enough reason remained to make him ashamed of the tears that would not be repressed.

Dora had a struggle to keep back a sob, but she

succeeded; and directly after, laid her cool hand on his forehead, and spoke soothingly.

"Hush," she said, gently; "we are saved, my poor boy, and you saved us. And you are not to die this time."

"Miss Dora," said Mary Davis, coming up, "I have been away for a rest, and I saw Captain Vaughan. He says you are to go home now. I will take your place."

"Yes," said Morley, "he is right. I will see you back. You will be fit for nothing to-morrow if you stay longer."

Dora assented unwillingly; and then, after commending the ensign to Mary's special attention, turned to leave.

However, even then it was a matter of time before she was out of the hospital, for she stopped frequently to bring water first to one and then to another. In fact, half the suffering was caused by thirst, brought on by the heat and wounds; and she had found this out on the previous day.

At last she stood in the open air with Morley, feeling the faint, cool, evening breeze fanning her cheek.

"I am very rude," she said, apologetically. "I have kept you waiting so long; but, indeed, I could not help it. I cannot pass the poor men, when I know they are longing for water, without giving it to them."

"Do not suppose me so devoid of feeling as to wish you to do so," said Morley. "But I have not thought you long. I was too much lost in astonishment. I thought young ladies always fainted at the sight of blood."

"Then you must think me very strong-minded and unladylike."

"On the contrary, you have raised my opinion of women altogether, Miss Vaughan; if blessings are of any avail, yours ought to be a happy life, for I heard several rough fellows utter them as you passed, short as was the time I was with you."

She made no reply, and she walked a little way in silence, which Morley broke.

"What does Miller think of Payne?"

"He fears the worst," faltered Dora, and a tear quivered on her lashes, to be hastily wiped away.

"She does not love him," thought Morley, as in the dusk he looked earnestly at her averted face. "She only looks upon him as a friend, to whom she owes a debt of gratitude. How fair, and sweet, and good she is! Why can I not take the good the gods provided me? Surely any man ought to be happy with the love of such a woman."

"There is always hope," he said, aloud, "and with such nursing he will be ungrateful if he does not speedily recover."

As they stood together inside the door Dora held out her hand.

"Thank you for coming," she said, smiling; while the moonlight falling on her showed a slight warm flush on her cheek, and a brightness in her eyes that had long been absent, brought there by the knowledge that she had surprised him, and that he thought more of her than before.

Morley clasped her hand, and looked into her eyes with a struggle going on in his heart. Could

he not tear Mabel's image from his breast, and redeem his character with Vaughan by making this girl his wife? On the one side was a wild, hopeless love, and the reproaches of his own conscience; on the other—

"Dora," he said, softly, "I have behaved like a villain. Can you forgive me?"

"No, never," she whispered, half smiling, but with tears ready to fall.

The young man stood motionless. It was not too late. Should he say more, or should he leave it like this?

Directly after he threw his arm round her and kissed her, and Dora, feeling all the misery she had experienced since her arrival in India fade from her mind like a dream, let her head sink on his breast, and cried for joy.

CHAPTER XXV.—"WILL HE RECOVER?"

THERE was consternation in the fort of Chut-negunj on the following day. It was evident that more active measures were being taken by the enemy, and the garrison found that all their energies would be needed to hold the place till help should arrive.

The numbers of the sepoys had increased greatly, and they had encamped just out of the range of the guns, on all sides of the fort. Pickets were posted in many places, the houses in the city occupied, and in fact the place was completely invested.

"I feel convinced," said the colonel to Major Harland, "that they have been joined by some big native chief, who is taking the lead, and originating plans for our destruction. I can distinguish a guiding hand in their latest proceedings; for instance, in the occupying of those two or three houses which command the inside of the walls. However, all going well, they will not harass us long. The sappers must have nearly finished in that direction."

"They have," said the major. "As far as I can tell, we shall be able to fire the mine at this time to-morrow. By the by, I suppose there is some truth in what Vaughan says—that Payne spiked those eighteen-pounders, for they have not made any attempt at firing them again. However he managed it I cannot think. We can't get anything out of him, according to what Miller says."

"No, poor fellow," said the colonel, sadly. "I have seen him, but I fear he is going fast. Stop, before you go, major, I want to say a word to you about Colonel Barnard's regiment."

This was a regiment of native infantry which had been brought by their colonel into the fort in the preceding week, for their numbers to be added to those of the defenders.

"Well," said the major, "what about them? They seem a quiet, respectable lot of fellows, so far as I can judge from what I have seen of them."

"I don't like it, Harland. I am sorry they came, for after all that has happened, and with such formidable enemies without the walls, I have strong doubts of the wisdom of letting a single nigger remain in the fort. I believe the wisest thing would be to turn out every one."

"Pooh, colonel, you are getting fanciful. I would

never let a nervous feeling take possession of me, and make me send away a lot of useful soldiers, all of whom we need."

"But look here, major. Danger from without is pressing. Where shall we be if we have treachery and mutiny within? One must look at all sides of the question. If men could be spared, I would send all the women away under escort to Jehadabad, where they would be safe. But, unfortunately, it is impossible. It is the thought of them that makes me feel the necessity of caution."

"Depend upon it, Barnard will say as I do, that because one regiment mutinies, it does not follow that all must."

"I will see him on the subject," said the colonel, "and at once."

He hastened to put this resolution into effect, and found that the major was right.

Colonel Barnard—a short, dark, stern-looking man, with a habit of grasping his beard when he spoke—heard him through with politeness and attention, but smiled slightly to himself as he answered—

"It is only natural that you should feel as you do, he said; "but I know the men, and you must take my word for it, Colonel Stafford, they are perfectly true to us. There is not a man of them but would fight for me to the death. You look dissatisfied, but surely we cannot afford to dismiss a whole regiment of tried, proved, well-regulated men without good cause."

"The cases we hear in every despatch are sufficient cause, in my opinion."

"Humph! Very well, Colonel Stafford, I will promise you one thing. At the very faintest sign of insubordination, or what looks like it, they shall be turned out, to take the enemy information as to our number, defences, and so on. Before that time you would not wish it, I am sure."

With that the colonel was obliged to be content, or to appear so, and he went back to his quarters in a thoughtful mood, to write despatches to the commander-in-chief describing their position.

"Dora," said Mabel, that morning, as the nurse prepared herself for her duties. "We are like sisters, are we not?"

"Certainly. Why?"

"Why do you not confide in me, then? What has restored you to yourself so quickly? Tell me, dear. It is not all joy that Mr. Payne still lives, is it?"

"I am very glad, of course, but one cannot be thoroughly so till he is out of danger. Do not stop me, Mab, I want to get to him, and see how he is."

"Dora, do you care for him?"

"Very much. Do not you?"

"Of course, but not in the way I mean. Do tell me, Dora."

"A boy like that, Mabel! How can you!"

"He must be older than you," said Mabel. "I wish I could come with you, love, and be useful. But mamma cannot spare me. And you will not tell me your secret?"

"Not yet, not yet," said Dora, with a slight ac-

cession of colour. "Don't hold me, Mabel. Indeed, I have nothing to tell you, and my poor patients need me. Oh, Mab," she said, shuddering, "if you knew the agonies some of them endure while Dr. Miller is dressing their wounds, you would not wish to be there. It turns me sick and cold, and I feel as though I must shut my eyes, and stop my ears, and run away. But when I see that my being there, and speaking to them, helps them, though ever so little, to bear it, I am glad I can control myself enough to stay. But, Mabel, if I were to see any one I loved go through such pain as I have seen in the last day or two, it would either kill me or destroy my reason."

"Do not go," said Mabel, looking white and pained. "I am sure you ought not; Robert would not let you if he knew."

"Good-bye for the present," was all Dora's reply; and she hurried away.

"How is Mr. Payne?" she asked, as she came upon Dr. Miller directly she had entered the hospital.

"I have not been near him again. There are too many fresh cases on our hands. I will go to him now if you like."

Dora followed him, resolutely keeping her eyes on the ground, that she might not see the wants of those they passed, for she felt that to Payne she owed her first attention.

A severe-looking chaplain was seated by him, reading; but as they came up, he moved to another bed. However, that fact had told Dora, before she was near enough to judge for herself, that Payne was conscious.

As she approached him, a look of intense pleasure, that went to Dora's heart, and gave her a dull sense of misery, came into the ensign's face. He tried to speak, but she held up her hand.

"Hush," she said, quietly. "I am a nurse, and you must do as I tell you."

She cut off two or three locks of hair that were in the way as the doctor attended to his head, and then waited while he looked at the other wound.

"I say, doctor," said the ensign, "I'd like to live if you can manage it."

"I'll do the best I can for you," said the doctor, who was evidently dissatisfied after his inspection of the cut Vaughan's sword had made. He looked at Dora.

"I shall be obliged to put him to a good deal of pain," he said in a low voice. "Can you bear it?"

Dora bowed her head.

There was silence as the doctor's deft fingers began to be busy, and Payne set his teeth hard, and drops broke out on his brow. Dora, pale as death herself, slipped her hand into his and held it.

At last a groan burst from the poor fellow's breast.

"Go," he gasped to Dora. "For pity's sake, go. It is not fit for you."

Dora shook her head resolutely, and sank on her knees by him.

"Be firm," she whispered. "It will soon be over."

His fingers tightened on hers, with the effort he

made to keep back the groans that strove for exit, and then suddenly relaxed. He had fainted.

For a few moments Dora did not move or speak. Then, as the doctor stood upright, she rose too.

"Is it over? Have you done?" she asked.

"Yes, thank goodness."

"Will he recover?"

"I cannot say."

Dora stood for a minute looking down at the unconscious patient, and then swayed backwards, but recovered herself directly as the doctor sprang to her side.

"No, no," she said, faintly, "it's nothing. I shall be better in a moment."

But in spite of her brave endeavours to fight off the sick feeling that oppressed her, the beds with their occupants seemed to float round her, and finally disappeared.

When she opened her eyes she was in a little ante-room, with Mary Davis bathing her face with cold water.

"Thanks, Mary, I am myself again," she said, raising herself to a sitting position, for the doctor had laid her on the floor. "I must go back now."

"No, miss, you mustn't. Dr. Miller said you were not to go in again, because it is too much for you."

"How long have I been here?"

"Nearly a quarter of an hour, miss."

Dora broke into a fit of weeping.

"Oh, Miss Dora," said Mary, sympathetically, "don't cry. He will get better, never fear."

"But think what he suffers, and all through Mabel and me. It is that which makes it so much worse, to think that but for us he might now be well and happy. There is only trouble in store for him if he gets better, for he is a deserter."

She wept quietly for a little, and then dried her eyes.

"Were you here in the night, Mary?"

"Some of it, miss. Captain Vaughan must be tired to-day, Miss Dora?"

"Why?"

"Didn't you know he was here all night, miss? He sat with Mr. Payne all the time, talking to him when he was sensible-like, and fanning him and giving him water when he was off his head."

Dora looked surprised, but made no remark.

"Come, Mary," she said, after a pause, "we must not stay here. Hark! Those dreadful guns! More work in store for us."

"Are you going to the men again, then, miss?"

"Of course I am. I am all the better for that cry, and feel stronger than ever."

Dr. Miller and Vaughan were standing by Payne, the little man evidently impatient to go, but held by Vaughan's hand on his arm.

"Miller," the young officer was saying, "I gave him that wound."

"You?"

"Yes. I did not know him. If he dies I shall never forgive myself. Do all in your power for him."

"My good fellow," said the doctor, testily, "of course I shall do all in my power for every one of them; but I can't neglect the others for him. As

it is, the three of us are nearly worked off our legs, though the M.D. of Barnard's regiment does make a difference. There, it is no use, I can't stop to talk. Delirious! Yes, he is; and I can't help it. Go and order your own men, for you're only in the way here."

Vaughan looked after his retreating figure, and then turned to Dora, who was rearranging a bandage that had become painful for one poor wretch who was suffering from the effects of a shell bursting near him.

"Look after Payne as much as you can," he said. "You heard what I told Miller?"

"Yes. Is that better? I am so glad. Are you thirsty? Poor fellow! I don't wonder at it. I will come back with some water directly. Yes, Rob, I am attending."

"That is all," said Vaughan. "I had no idea you were such a nurse, Dora. I won't hinder you. Good-bye for the present. I shall look in again when I can, to see how poor Harry is."

There was a set, stern look gradually coming over the faces of the officers in the fort, soon to grow habitual to them, for they found they had a much more formidable enemy to deal with than they had imagined. Spies were continually bringing the most disheartening accounts of the state of the country, showing how widely spread was the rebellion that they had at first looked upon as merely a slight local disaffection, so that there seemed little hope of their being relieved at present.

The reason of the sudden change in the tactics of the enemy was soon explained. A spy brought word that the Rajah of Krohl, with a large contingent, had joined the besiegers, and was bringing his military skill and knowledge to bear on the question.

The engineer officers suddenly found their hands full, for during the next few days it was discovered that the enemy was running mines under the walls in several directions, and countermines had to be run out to prevent their taking effect. This had a most discouraging effect on the men, who were brave enough generally, and ready to face the steady fire of artillery without shrinking, but who turned pale and lost heart at the thought that at any moment the ground where they stood might open, and they, without a moment's warning, be blown to atoms. However, one danger had been averted—the houses overlooking part of the compound had been successfully mined, and were now levelled with the ground.

The colonels consulted together, and every measure possible was taken to strengthen the defences, and to prevent the rebels from again making a breach in the wall. There was no doubt that they had in the Rajah Ismail an enemy of no mean intellect, who was beginning to conduct the siege on scientific principles, before which, if help did not come, the fort must give way.

"Morley," said Colonel Stafford, after dinner, to the young officer, two or three days after his interview with Dora Vaughan, "I have bad news with regard to Bagra."

"Not that it has fallen, colonel?"

"That is it, Morley," said the colonel, gloomily. "The general held out in the fort as long as he could,

but, as you are aware, he had none but native regiments, and only one, or rather part of one, remained faithful. There was treachery within the walls, and the gates were thrown open to the mutineers by those on whom Carnley had depended."

"And the general?" asked Morley, after a horrified silence.

"Murdered," said the colonel.

"And what became of the civilians—the European residents who took refuge there with their wives and families?"

"Don't ask me, Morley. It is too horrible a tale. Heaven grant that it be not repeated here."

"Poor Carnley!" said Morley. "He was a true gentleman and a brave soldier, in spite of his peculiarities. I wish I had been at his side. We would have astonished some of them before we fell. But, colonel, you are better off than he was, for you have plenty of determined Englishmen, who will hold the fort in spite of everything, and defend the women and children till there are none left alive to do it."

"Yes, yes, I know that, my dear boy; and we can hold out for some time yet by ourselves. I have hope of reinforcements almost any time."

"Colonel," said Major Harland, coming up with a field-glass in his hand, "I want you to come with me on the parapet. I believe they are running up a redoubt within range. There is something going on over there."

The colonel followed him, and looked anxiously through the glass, to see that the enemy were cutting a trench in the direction of the fort, not straight, but by zigzags, the nearest sides of which were so constructed as to offer pretty good resistance to round shot. From this they had run out a side trench, ending in what was beginning to assume the proportions of a redoubt, for artillery.

"They must have got some pretty good engineers among them," said the colonel. "Well, major, if they have got any guns to bear on us from there, we must cover a sortie to attack that redoubt. To fire now would only be waste of ammunition, as they have got strong earthworks, I see."

"Their numbers are so overpowering that a sortie must be a last resource," said the major. "I agree with Chester, that our chief strength lies in mining."

A little council of war was held on the subject, at which most of the officers of the European regiments were present, and Colonel Barnard of the native regiment.

During the discussion, a jemadar, or native lieutenant, entered hastily, and said a few words to the colonel in a whisper. The officer grasped his beard, and glared fiercely at the jemadar, and then rose and followed him out.

"Grumbling and dissatisfied, are they?" said he, as soon as they were in the open air. "I will speak to them, and they will soon give that up."

"Stop, sahib, you will not go like this. There is mutiny in the ranks. Will you not have an escort of Europeans? They may kill you if you go alone."

"Kill me! What, my men, that I have always treated well, and like men—not as if they were dogs, as some do? No, no, my man—I am not afraid of that."

The jemadar still hesitated, but, as the colonel went on, he followed him, and kept at his side.

A little later, as the council was breaking up, there was the sound of some irregular firing of musketry, and, a few minutes after, a man, panting and wild-looking, ran up to the colonel and Major Harland as they came out into the compound.

"Treachery, sir!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could speak. "Colonel Barnard's regiment are in open mutiny. They have shot the colonel, and all the other officers are down."

According to Cocker.

TWO hundred years ago—in 1678—was published the *Arithmetic* of Edward Cocker. It was a posthumous work, the author having died in 1677. Of the first edition only three or four copies are known, and even Dr. Dibden was never able to see any one published before 1700, and mentions the 32nd edition as the earliest he had met with. The 56th was published in 1767. The high estimation in which the work was held gave rise to the saying—which has become a common proverb as applied to correctness in figures—"According to Cocker," still used by multitudes who merely know the name through the saying, and not one in ten thousand of whom has seen the book. It is, indeed, simply in this proverb that his name has descended to these times; for his work is now only a curiosity of literature. *Arithmetic* is so especially an exact science that there is little scope for variations in its treatment; and more recent writers have had hardly anything to do but to simplify its problems and their solutions, by putting them in language easy to be understood by their pupils.

Cocker commences with "Notation of Numbers," and holds the cypher (o) in high esteem. He says: "Most authors maintain that unit is the beginning of number, and itself no number; but, looking upon the principles and definitions in the first rudiments of geometry, we shall find that the definition of a point is no way congruous with the definition of an unit in arithmetic; and therefore one or unit must be in the bounds or limits of number, and consequently the beginning of number is not to be found in the number 1; wherefore making number and magnitude congruent in principles, and like in definitions, we make and constitute a cypher to be the beginning of number, or rather the medium between increasing and decreasing numbers, commonly called absolute or whole numbers, and negative and fractional numbers, between which nothing can be imagined more agreeable to the definition of a point in geometry; for as a point is an adjunct of a line, and itself no line, so is (o) cypher an adjunct of number, and itself no number; and as a point in geometry cannot be divided or increased into parts, so likewise (o) cannot be divided or increased into parts; for as many points, though in number infinite, do make no line, so many (o) cyphers, though in number infinite, do make no number." . . . "The cypher, though of itself it expresseth not any certain or known quantity, yet is the beginning or root of number." Thus he gives precedence to the cypher, as perhaps

is due to the figure that gives its name to cyphering. Of troy weight he says—"The least fraction or denomination of weight, used in England, is a grain of wheat gathered out of the middle of the ear, and well dried," and that 32 grains of this wheat make "24 artificial grains." In like manner he states, that "the least denominative part of long measure is a barleycorn well dried, and taken out of the middle of the ear." There are occasional quaintnesses, such as, "now a perch is a superficies very aptly resembled by a square trencher;" but nothing calling for particular notice. In 1684 was published a further posthumous work, "Cocker's Decimal Arithmetic," to which is added the "Fabrick of the Logarithm," and algebra; and also "Questions in Anatocism," which last word few would recognize as meaning "compound interest."

Cocker also produced an *English Dictionary*, (the second edition was published in 1715), which explains "the most refined and difficult words and terms in divinity, philosophy, law, physick, mathematics, navigation, husbandry, military discipline, with other arts and sciences; and the derivation of them from the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, and other languages." Besides this, it is a biographical, historical, and topographical encyclopædia, "a work very necessary for all persons," says the title-page—"the like never yet extant." And, probably, nothing has since appeared like it, or so much resembling what might be a young *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The following are a few extracts from this Dictionary, a word which he defines "a collection of words orderly digested and explained, alphabetically."

"Dunmow, in Essex. There is a proverb in this country, 'He may fetch a fitch of bacon from Dunmow.' This depends on a custom in the priory of Dunmow, founded by Juga, a noble lady, for black nuns, in 1111; but the property was after altered into a male nunnery, and the friars were merry when they ordained that if any person should come and kneel on two stones (yet to be seen at the church door before the convent), and take the ensuing oath, he might demand a gammon of bacon, which should be freely given him:—

'You shall swear by the custom of our confession,
That you never made any nuptial transgression
Since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls or contentious strife,
Or otherwise, in bed or at board,
Offended each other in deed or word,
Or since the parish clerk said 'Amen,'
Wished yourselves unmarried agen;
Or in a twelve month and a day
Repented not in thought any way,
But continued true, and in desire,
As when you join'd hands in holy choir.
If to these conditions without all fear,
Of your own accord you will freely swear,
A gammon of bacon you shall receive,
And carry it home with love and free leave;
For this is our custom at Dunmow well known,
Tho' the sport be ours, the bacon's your own.'

"It appeared by an old record, that Rich. Wright, of Norfolk, in 1465, and S. Samuell, of Little Easton,

1467, and Tho. Lee, of Coxhall, in Essex, 1511, took this oath, and received their bacon."

"Clergy, the whole body of ministers; also allowance for a malefactor to read his neck-verse." Probably few people now understand what is meant by "neck-verse;" it is thus defined in Bailey's Dictionary (1755)—"A verse or two in a Latin book of a Gothic black character, which a person convicted of several crimes (especially manslaughter, for which he otherwise should suffer death) was formerly put to read in open court; and if the ordinary of Newgate said '*leget ut clericus*'—i.e., he reads like a clerk—he was only burnt in the hand, and set at liberty. But now this practice of reading the neck-verse is quite left off."

This was termed "benefit of clergy." The brand was "on the brawn of the thumb." "M." for murder or manslaughter, and "T." for other criminals who had the benefit of neck-verse. Under the head "manslaughter," he says: "It has the benefit of the neck-verse for the first time."

"Knights of the Hare consists of fourteen gentlemen who were knighted by King Edward III., in France, at the shouting of the French, which they thought was the onset of battle, but was only occasioned by the starting of an hare at the head of their army."

"Topaz—A precious stone, some of the colour of saffron, others of gold. It is said that if it be put into boiling liquor, it will instantly cool it."

Under the head "Hugonots," he gives two possible derivations of the uncertain origin of the term—from

"Hugo—A learned man among them, or from—
"Hugou—a gate in Tours, where they usually assembled."

"Glatton—Welsh flannel."—This may be interesting information to the officers of her Majesty's ship of that name.

It is probable that many a lawyer would be puzzled if informed that he was "Prediator, an attorney who is knowing about lands," &c.

There must have been some difficulty in "going ahead" in a country in Scythia inhabited by "Abarimen, whose feet turn backward."

"Andradswald—A dreadful wood, running through Kent and Sussex, once 120 miles long."

"Badger—A buyer or transporter of provisions, also a beast called a brock."

"Barnacle—A Scotch or soland goose, growing, they say, upon trees; also a fish that eats through the planks of a ship; likewise an instrument to put on the nose of an unruly horse." This might be tried by putting spectacles on a troublesome horse!

"Boramersy—A plant in Scythia, like a lamb, which dyes after eating up all the grass round it. Cocker does not say what colour it "dyes."

"Cab—an Hebrew measure, a pint." If, however, a "cab" of beer was asked for, it would be esteemed a large order—unless, indeed, the publican knew Hebrew! If he did, he might understand an order for a "log" of beer, "a Hebrew measure of six eggshells, or half a pint."

His definition of "quicksilver" is curiously wrong. It is, "A volatile chymical preparation, compounded of a slimy water, mixt with pure white earth."

Does the present family of Havelock trace its descent from "Havelock, an infant found in the woods by the King of Denmark, who, being brought up in his Court, was at first but a scullion in the kitchen, but for his ingenuity prefer'd by degrees, till at length he married the king's daughter?"

Collectors of jewels would be delighted to obtain a specimen of "Chelidonium, a precious stone in the body of a swallow." Another precious stone would be of considerable value under certain circumstances, and might be invaluable to Good Templars, for he describes "Dionisia" as "a jewel, which being bruised and drank, tastes like wine, and prevents drunkenness."

The Venetian glasses which detected the presence of poison have their fellows in wood, for "Evate" is a "wood whereof cups are made from Ethiopia, which will break if poison be put into them."

In these days of cheap excursions there can hardly be a "cockney" left in London, if Cocker's definition is still a correct one. "Cockney—A child born in London, so ignorant in country affairs that he asks whether the cock neighs as well as the horse."

He does not say up to what date existed "Lidford law in Cornwall, where, the proceedings in criminal causes being so short, they are usually reproached for hanging men first and trying them afterwards."

Under the head of "Helstone, a town in Cornwall"—he lengthens Cornwall by an "l" in this place—"in which county formerly lived a beggar, named Brawn, upon whom this epitaph was made:

"Here Brawn, the quondam beggar, lies,
Who counted by his tale,
Some six-score winters and above,
Such virtue is in ale.
Ale was his meat, his drink, his cloth,
His physick too, beside,
And could he still have drunk his ale,
Sure he had never died."

Here is a law term—"Postlimirriage, the return of one thought to be dead, who must be restored to his house by entering through a hole in the wall." Query, if a door would satisfy the requirements of the law!

If a champagne of the same name is found to have a nutty flavour, it will be that Cocker describes as "Mum, a strong drink made at Brunswick, in Germany, with husks of walnuts infused."

Modern astronomers will be enlightened by his definition of a "Comet—dry exhalations drawn from the earth, and being set on fire, appear like a hairy blazing star, with a tail."

It may be a question for "Notes and Queries," whether the present proprietor collects his "Maiden rents—A noble paid by every tenant in the manour of Builth in Radnorshire, as a fine for marrying his daughter."

The present generation believes that it has invented the word "collide," and that it has grown out of modern railway collisions; but Cocker has it as "Collide, to bruise together."

Under the head "Salisbury," he mentions "a famous cathedral, which the poet thus describes:—

"How many days in one whole year there be,
So many windows in one church we see.
So many marble pillars there appear
As there are hours throughout the fleeting year.
So many gates as months one year doth view,
Strange tale to tell, yet not so strange as true."

Is Scotland Yard cognizant of such people as "Redubbers," who "buy stolen cloth, and convert it to other uses, or dye it into another colour"?

His spelling of "wapse," for wasp, gives authority for the form used even in the schools; and who can decide which is best—the modern "yacht," or Cocker's "yacht"?

The modern schools would scarcely agree in his definition of perspective as "the art of helping the sight by glasses;" or that "pneumatics" means "books of wind and wind instruments, as organs, &c." And his classical rather than his geographical knowledge is shown in his description of "Pygmies—Little people, or dwarfs, said to inhabit the Indian mountains, who are eighteen inches, or a foot and a half high; the females bear children at five years of age, and are reckoned old at eight. They are reported to be at perpetual war with the cranes."

He describes logarithms as "Numbers which, being fitted to proportional numbers, always retain equal distances"—which is as perspicuous as Johnson's definition of "Network—anything reticulated and decussated with interstices between the inter-sections."

Medical students may be assisted in passing their examinations by knowing that "phlebotomy" is "opening a vein, letting blood—taught to mankind, say some authors, by the sea horse that lives in the River Nilus, who, when overcharged with eating, pierces his leg with a sharp reed, and having bled enough, stops the orifice with mud."

Here is the description of an animal, probably now extinct, as none of the recent African explorers mention it. "Dabuck—An animal in Africa, in shape like a wolf, feet like a man, who wakes up and devours dead carcasses. Music or singing brings him out of his den, and he is then seized by throwing a rope about his legs."

Bird fanciers when out at night for a lark are "Lowbellers, such as go with a lowbell, used in the catching of larks, with a lough, luff, light, or flame." "Lough" is also "the vessel wherein the light is put in Lowbelling."

It is generally the want of money which is maddening; but "madning money" he describes as "old Roman coins found about Dunstable—are so called by the country people."

Has our present Prince of Wales ever received his "Mise—A present made by the Welsh to every new Prince of Wales of five thousand pounds sterling, which they paid three times in the reign of King James I., to himself, Prince Henry, and Prince Charles, his sons? So, in the County Palatine of Chester, three thousand marks were paid him as Earl of that county."

He says that "Melton, or Mill-Town-Mowbray,

in Leicestershire," is "so called from melting metals to make cups, and from the Mowbrays formerly landlords thereof." No doubt a great many "cups" are still made there.

These extracts will suffice to "dilucidate, to make plain," how varied is the information contained in his dictionary; and, although from their nature fragmentary, they have been "nexible, that which may be knit or tied together," by the common cord of being "according to Cocker."

THE Geneva correspondent of the *Times* states that the severity of the weather has brought immense flocks of wild ducks into the Val de Travers, where the streams, rich in trout, remain unfrozen owing to the sheltered position of the valley. To make head against this invasion, and prevent the extermination of the fish, the government of Neuchâtel have prolonged the shooting season, which had already expired, for eight days. Another interesting fact in natural history is the unwonted presence at Geneva of thousands of gulls. They fly all day long in the neighbourhood of the Point du Mont Blanc, disputing with the swans the bread thrown by visitors into the river. The forests of the Bernese Jura are infested by droves of wild boars, sometimes so numerous as to defy attack. Bands of wolves hover about the farms at night, and hundreds of hungry chamois have descended from the mountains and are wandering about the valleys in search of food.

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Frontispiece.

WATCHING.—(Page 64.)

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A GILDED PILL.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE BIRD'S CAGE.

RICHARD SHINGLE, Shoemaker. Repairs neatly executed."

This legend was written in yellow letters, shaded with blue, upon an oval, red board. Red, blue, and yellow form a pleasing combination to some eyes; but when the yellow is drab, the blue dirty, and the scarlet of a brickdusty tint, the harmony is not pleasing. Moreover, the literary artist could not be complimented upon his skill in writing in pigment with a camel-hair brush; for, not content to be staid and steadfast in Roman characters, he had indulged in wild flourishes, which gave the signboard the appearance of a battle-field, upon which so many ordinary letters were staggering about, while three or four tyrannical capitals were catching them with lassoes, which twined wildly round their heads and legs.

For instance, the first "d" was in difficulties, the "g" was pulled out of place, the "h" and "o" tied tightly together, while just below, the "repairs" seemed to be neatly executed indeed, for the "r" had a yellow rope round its neck, having been hung by "Richard," beneath which it was suspended, with the rest of the letters kicking frantically because that initial was at its last gasp.

But this idea, probably, did not present itself to the inhabitants of Crowder's-buildings, a pleasant *cul de sac* in the neighbourhood of the Angel at Islington. Crowder,

once upon a time, bought two houses in a front street, between and under which there was an entrance like a tunnel, which led to the back gardens and back doors of the said houses; and Crowder—now dead and numbered with the just—being a man of frugal mind, gazed at the gardens of his freehold messuage and tenements, and saw that they were useful as cat walks, to make beds growing oyster and other shells, and vegetables of the most melancholy kind. He let the fact dawn upon his understanding that the vegetables grown might be bought better for sixpence per annum, and resolved that he would utilize the space.

To do this, he built up two rows of staring-eyed, four-roomed tenements, sixteen in all, separated by twelve feet of pavement, whitewashed them as they stood staring at one another, and turned the two garden deserts into a busy, thrifty hive, where some twenty or thirty families flourished and grew dirty.

The occupants of the two houses in the street complained, and left; but Crowder let the houses at a higher rent without the gardens—let the little tenements each at ten shillings a week, and turned out those who did not pay; and for the rest of his life collected his own dues, did his own painting and whitewashing, even plastered upon occasion; and at last, while repairing a chimney-stack, and putting on a new pot, at the age of seventy-five, like a thrifty soul as he was, slipped from the ladder, rolled off the roof of No. 10, fell into the open paved

space, with his head in the centre gutter, where the soapsuds ran down, and his heels on a scraper—every house had a scraper to make it complete—and was so much injured that Nature gave him notice to quit his earthly habitation, evicted him, and, save in name, the buildings knew him no more.

For they passed into the hands of Maximilian Shingle, "broker and setrer," as his brother said—a most worthy member of society: a sticky-fingered man, who, through this last quality, was enabled to lay up honey in store. In fact, he was so well off that, when Crowder's buildings were brought to the hammer by Crowder's heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, the hammer that knocked them down knocked them into Max Shingle's possession.

It was a retired spot after passing through the tunnel, and hence it became the popular playground of the children of the neighbourhood, who chalked the pavement, broke their knees and heads upon its harsher corners, and made it the scene of the festive dance when a dark-visaged organ-man came down to grind the last new airs of the day.

By a great act of benevolence, Maximilian Shingle, who was a lowly, good man, a shining light at his chapel, where he was deacon, had, though inundated with applications for No. 4 when it became empty, let it to his unlucky brother Richard, who flourished under the sign that headed this chapter, made boots and shoes, and neatly executed the repairs in the dilapidated Oxonians and strong working-men's bluchers that came to his lot.

It was front-room cleaning up day at Richard Shingle's, and Mrs. Shingle—familiarily spoken to as "mother"—was in her glory, having what she called a good rummage. Had her home possessed a back yard or a front garden, every article of furniture would have been turned out; but as there was not an inch of back yard, and the front garden was very small, being limited to six flower-pots behind a small green fence on the upstairs window-sill, Mrs. Shingle was debarred from that general clearance.

But she did the best she could to get at

the floor for a busy scrub while her husband and daughter were away; and the consequence was that the side-table had its petticoats tucked up round its waist, thereby revealing the fact that its legs were not mahogany but deal; the hearth-rug was rolled up, and sitting in the big-armed Windsor chair; the fender had gone to bed in the back room; and the chairs seemed to be playing at being acrobats, and were standing one upon the other; while the chimney ornaments—shepherds and shepherdesses for the most part—were placed as audience on the top of the little cupboard to look on.

Mrs. Shingle finished her task of cleaning up before descending, carrying a pail which had to be emptied and rinsed out before her hands were dried.

Mrs. Shingle was a pleasant, plump woman, who had run a good deal to dimple; in fact, the backs of her hands were full of coy little pits, where the water hid when she washed, and her wedding ring lay in a kind of furrow from not having grown with her hands.

She gave a few touches with a duster to the lower room, which was half sitting-room, one-fourth kitchen, and one-fourth workshop, inasmuch as there was a low shoemaker's bench, with its tools, under the window, beneath which, and secured to the wall by a strap, were lasts, awls, pincers, and various other implements of the shoemaker's art. On a stand close by stood a sewing machine, and on the table were so many patches of kid and patent leather, evidently awaiting the needle.

Mrs. Shingle had finished her hurried cleaning, and the furniture was put back; been to the glass and arranged her hair, and finished off by taking out three pins, which she stuck in her mouth as if it were a cushion, giving herself a shake, which caused her dress, that had been round her waist, to fall into its customary folds; and then, sitting down, she was soon busy at work binding boots, when the open door was darkened, and a fashionably-dressed young man, of five-and-twenty years, tapped on the panel with the end of his stick, entered with a languid walk, said, "How do, aunt?" and seated himself on the edge of the table.

The visitor's clothes were very good, but they had a slangy cut, and might have been made for some Leviathan of a music-hall, who intended to delineate what he termed "a swell." For the cuffs of the excessively short coat nearly hid the young fellow's hands, even as the ends of his trousers almost concealed his feet; his shirt front was ornamented with large crimson zigzag patterns, and his hat was so arranged on the back of his head that it pressed down over his forehead a series of unhappy, greasy-looking little curls, which came down to his eyebrows.

Mrs. Shingle nodded, and stabbed a pair of boot-tops very viciously as the young man saluted her.

"Old man out?" he said.

"You know he is," retorted Mrs. Shingle, "else you wouldn't have come."

"Don't be hard on a fellow, aunt," he said. "You know I can't help coming. Where's Jessie?"

"Out," said Mrs. Shingle, sharply.

"She always is out when I come," drawled the young man, tapping his teeth with his cane. "I believe she is upstairs now."

"Then you'd better go up and see," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle. "Look here, Fred, I'm sure your father don't approve of your coming here."

"I can't help what the governor likes," was the reply. "I'm not going to ask him where I'm to go. Is Jessie out?"

"I told you she was, sir," replied Mrs. Shingle.

"Don't be cross, aunt. It's all right, you know. The old man will kick a bit, but he'll soon come round. Don't you get being rusty about it. You ought to be pleased, you know; because she aint likely to have a chance to do half so well. I shall go and meet her."

As he spoke, the young man—to wit, Frederick Shingle, Esquire, eldest son and heir of Maximilian Shingle, Esquire, of Penton-square, Pentonville—slowly descended from the table, glanced at himself in the glass, and made for the door.

"She's gone down the Goswell-road, I know," said the young man, turning to show his teeth in a grin.

"No, no," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle, hastily.

"Thanky, I know," said the young fellow, with a wink, and he passed out.

"Bother the boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Shingle, hastily. "Now, he'll meet her, and she'll be upset, and Dick will be cross, and Tom look hurt. Oh, dear, dear, dear, I wish she'd been as ugly as sin! Ah, my precious," she added, as a trim, neat little figure came hurrying in, snatched off her hat, and hung it behind the door.

She was only in a dark brown stuff dress, but it was the very pattern of neatness, as it hung in the most graceful of folds; while over all shone as sweet a face as could be seen from east to west, in the bright innocence looking out of dark grey eyes.

"Back again, mother," accompanied by a hasty kiss, was the reply to Mrs. Shingle's salute.

Then, brushing the crisp fair hair back from her white temples, the girl popped herself into a chair, opened a little packet, drew close to the sewing machine, and in response to the pressure of a couple of little feet, that would have made anything but cold crystallized iron thrill, the wheel revolved, and with a clinking rattle the needle darted up and down.

"Then you didn't meet Fred?" said Mrs. Shingle, watching her child as she spoke.

"Fred? No, mother," was the reply, as the girl started, coloured, and the consequence was a tangle of the threads, and a halt. "Has he been here?" she continued, as with busy fingers she tried to set the work free once more.

"Yes, just now, and set out to meet you. I wonder how you could have missed him."

There was a busy pause for a few minutes, during which some work was hastily finished, and while Mrs. Shingle kept watching her child from time to time uneasily, the latter rose from the machine, and began to double up the packet upon which she had been at work, and to place it upon a couple more lying close by on a black cloth.

"I hope you don't encourage him, Jessie," said Mrs. Shingle at last.

"Mother!" exclaimed the girl, and her face became like crimson—"how can you?"

"Well, there, there, I'll say no more," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle—"only it worries me. Now, make haste, there's a dear, or

you'll be late. Don't stop about, Jessie; and, whatever you do, don't come back without the money. Your uncle's sure to come or send to-day, and it's so unpleasant not being ready."

"I'll be as quick as I can, mother," said Jessie, briskly.

"And you won't stop, dear?"

"I don't know what you mean, mother," said the girl, with a tell-tale blush on her cheek.

"How innocent you are, to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Shingle, tartly. Then, smiling, she continued—"There, I'm not cross, but I don't quite like it. Of course, Tom don't know when you go to the warehouse, and won't be waiting. There, I suppose young folks will be young folks."

"I can't help it, mother, if Mr. Shingle meets me by accident," said Jessie, blushing very rosy, and pouting her lips.

"But he mustn't meet you by accident; and you're cousins, and it oughtn't to be. Uncle Max would be furious if he knew of it, and those two boys will be playing at Cain and Abel about you, and you mustn't think anything about either of them."

"Mother!" exclaimed Jessie.

"I can't help it, my dear; I must speak, and put a stop to it. Your father would be very angry if he knew."

"Oh, don't say so, mother!" exclaimed Jessie, with a troubled look.

"But I must say it, my dear, before matters get serious; and I've been thinking about it all, and I've come to the conclusion that it must all be stopped. Now, what impudence, to be sure! I believe that's him come again."

"May I come in?" said a voice, after a light tap at the door. And a frank, manly face appeared in the opening.

"Yes, you can come in," said Mrs. Shingle, sharply. And, in spite of her knitted brows, she could not keep back a smile of welcome as the owner of the frank, manly face entered the room, kissed her, and then turned and caught Jessie's hands in his, with the result that the parcel she was making up slipped off the table to the ground.

"There, how clumsy I am!" he exclaimed, picking up the fallen package, and

nearly striking his head against Jessie's, as, flushed and agitated, she stooped too. "Well, aunt dear, how are you?"

"Oh, I'm well enough," said Mrs. Shingle, tartly, as she stretched a piece of silk between her fingers and her teeth, and made it twang like a guitar string. "What do you want here?"

"What do I want, aunt? All right, Jessie—I'll tie the string. Thought I'd come in, and carry Jessie's parcel."

"Oh, there!" exclaimed the girl.

"Now, look here, Mr. Tom Shingle," said Mrs. Shingle, holding up her needle as if it were a weapon of offence. "You two have been planning this."

"Mother!" cried Jessie.

"Oh, no, we did not, aunt," cried the young man; "it was all my doing. No, no, Jessie—I'll carry the parcel."

"No, no, Tom; indeed you must not," cried Jessie.

"I should think not, indeed!" cried Mrs. Shingle, who, as she glanced from one to the other, and thought of her own early days, plainly read the love that was growing up between the young people; but could not see that her first visitor, Fred, had come back, and was standing gazing, with a sallow, vicious look upon his face, at what was going on inside, before going off with his teeth set and an ugly glare in his eyes.

"Tom Shingle," continued the lady of the house, "I mean Mr. Tom—Mr. Thomas Shingle—you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to behave in this way. You quite the gentleman, and under Government, and coming to poor people's houses, and wanting to carry parcels and all, like a poor errand-boy."

"Stuff and nonsense, aunt!—I'm not a gentleman, and I'm only your nephew; and whilst I'm here I'm not going to see dear little Jessie here go through the street carrying a parcel, when I can do it for her."

"But you must not, indeed, Tom—I mean Mr. Shingle," said Jessie, in a half-tearful, half-laughing fashion—"I'm going to the warehouse, and I must carry it myself."

"I know you are going to the warehouse," said Tom, laughing; "but you must not carry the parcel yourself."

"But, my dear boy," said Mrs. Shingle, who was evidently softening, "think of what your father would say."

"I can't help what he would say, aunt," said the young man, earnestly; "I only know I can't help coming here, and I don't think you want to be cruel and drive me away."

"No—no—no," said Mrs. Shingle, "but—"

"Do you, Jessie?"

"No, Tom—Mr. Shingle," faltered Jessie. "But—"

"But—but!" exclaimed the young man, impatiently. "Bother Mr. Shingle! My dear Jessie, why are you turning so cold here before your mother? Are you ashamed of our love?"

"No—no, Tom," she cried, eagerly.

"And you know how dearly I do love you?"

"Yes, Tom," faltered Jessie, sadly; "but it must be only as cousins."

"And why?" said the young man, sternly.

"Because," said Jessie, laying her hand upon his arm, "I'm only a very poor girl, Tom, and half educated."

"What a wicked story, Jessie," cried Mrs. Shingle, who had her apron to her eyes, but now spoke up indignantly—"why, you write beautiful."

"And," continued Jessie, "your father—my father would never consent to it; for I'm not a suitable choice for you to make."

"Why, Jessie," cried the young man, "you talk like a persecuted young lady in a book. What nonsense! Uncle Richard, if he felt sure that I should make you a good husband, would give his consent. And, as to my father—"

"Now, look here, you two," said Mrs. Shingle, "it's important that Jessie should get to the warehouse with those things, and you're stopping idling. It's late as it is."

"Come along, then," cried Tom, seizing the parcel.

"No, no," cried Jessie, who looked pale, and trembled.

"No, indeed; he must not go with you," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Don't be cruel, aunt," said Tom, appealingly. "I don't like Jessie to go by herself."

"There, then, she's not going by herself;

I'm going with her," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle.

"Then let me go instead."

"No, no," cried Jessie, getting agitated; "you must not."

"You have some reason, Jessie," said Tom, looking at her suspiciously.

"No, no, Tom; don't look at me like that," she cried.

"Then tell me why," he said, sternly.

"The man at the warehouse made remarks last time you came," said Jessie, hesitating.

"I'll make marks and remarks on him, if he does," cried Tom. "Aunt," he continued, angrily, "I can't bear it. It's not right for Jessie to go alone; and I don't believe you were going. It makes me half mad to think that she may be insulted by some puppy or another, and I not be there to knock him down."

"But no one will insult her, my boy," said Mrs. Shingle, looking at him admiringly.

"But people do, and have," cried Tom, grinding his teeth. "She has told me so. Because she goes with a parcel through the streets, every unmanly rascal seems to consider she is fair game for him; and—hang it, aunt, I can't help it!—if any scoundrel does it again, I'll half kill him!"

"Oh, Tom, Tom," whispered Jessie, while her mother gave him an admiring look, as he strode up and down, with the veins in his forehead starting, and then uttered a sob.

"I can't help it," he cried; "it's more than a fellow can bear. I'm not ashamed to own it. I love Jessie dearly; and if she'll be my little wife, I don't care what anybody says. Poor girl, indeed! Where's the lady in our set that can stand before her?"

"Not many, I know," said Mrs. Shingle, proudly.

"She can't help uncle being poor, and I can't help my father being rich. Come, aunt, you'll let me go?"

"I mustn't, my dear boy."

"Then it's because that brother of mine has been here," cried Tom, angrily.

"No, no, no!" cried Mrs. Shingle; "indeed it isn't, my dear boy. But I mustn't

allow it—I mustn't, indeed. Your father would never forgive me."

"Jessie, dear," cried the young man, taking her hand, "you know I love you."

"I know you say you do, Tom," she faltered.

"And I think you care for me—a little."

"Oh, no, Tom; I don't think I do—not a bit," she said, half archly, half with the tears in her sweet eyes, as they would look tenderly at him, and seemed to say how much she would like him to come and protect her.

"I do not believe you, my darling," he cried, impetuously. "I'm quite satisfied about that. Aunt, dear, you'll let me go with her?"

"I don't like it," said Mrs. Shingle; "and I'm sure it will lead to trouble."

"Not it, aunt," cried the young man. "Come, Jessie."

"No, no, no!" cried Jessie. "Indeed, you ought not to come, Tom."

"Tom! Well, I must come after that," he cried.

"Oh, no. I did not mean it," she said.

"Well, look here," said the young fellow.

"Listen, both of you. If you will not let

me walk with you side by side, I'll follow like a shadow."

"Shadows can't carry parcels," said Jessie, merrily.

"This one can, and will," he cried.

"There, go along, do, both of you," said Mrs. Shingle, whose eyes twinkled with pleasure as she looked on Tom's eager face. "You'll be dreadfully late."

"All right," cried Tom, joyfully; "we'll make haste, and if we are going to be late we'll take a cab."

"Because we are ashamed of the parcel," said Jessie, demurely.

"Ashamed!" cried Tom. "Why, if you'll come with me I'll take the parcel under one arm and you under the other, and walk all round the quadrangle at Somerset House when the clerks are leaving, just to make them all envious."

"Go along, do," cried Mrs. Shingle. And she stood gazing after them as there was a playful struggle for the parcel at the door; while, as they disappeared, the plump little woman took up her shoebinding, began stitching, and said—

"Heigho! I'm afraid I've done very wrong."

CHAPTER II.

HOPPER—SHIPS HUSBAND.

HALLOA, you sir," said a snarling voice; "mind where you're running to."

"Beg pardon! Halloa, Mr. Hopper, is it you?" exclaimed Tom.

"Eh? What? Yes, it is me, you rough, ill-mannered cub. Tom Shingle, if you were my son, hang it, sir, I'd thrash you, sir—trying to knock down a respectable wayfarer who is getting old and infirm."

He shook the ugly knobby stick he carried at the young man as he spoke, and his great massive head, with its unkempt grizzled hair and untended beard and whiskers, looked anything but pleasant; for from be-

neath his shaggy, overhanging brows his eyes seemed to flash again.

"I didn't try to knock you down," shouted Tom Shingle, putting his face close to that of the old fellow, who looked as if his sixty years had been spent in gathering dirt more than in cleaning it off.

"Don't shout. I'm not so deaf as all that, you ugly ruffian. Pick up those boots."

Tom stooped, and picked up a very old pair of unpolished boots that the other had been carrying beneath his arm, and had let fall on the pavement in the collision.

"There you are, Mr. Hopper, and I beg your pardon, and I'm very sorry," said Tom, smiling pleasantly. "There you are," he continued, tucking the boots under his arm. "It's all right now."

"What are you halloaing like that for, you ugly young bull-calf?" snarled the old fellow, shaking his stick. "Do you think I want all the people in the buildings to come out and listen? Don't I tell you I'm not so deaf as all that, hang you? What are you going to do with that girl?"

"Only going down into the City," replied Tom.

"Hey?" said the old fellow.

"City!" shouted Tom.

"Oh, does your father know you're going with her?" cried the old fellow, with a malevolent grin beginning to overspread his countenance.

"No," said Tom, flushing slightly; while Jessie began to look troubled.

"Hey?"

"No!" shouted Tom.

"Does her father know you've come?" said the old fellow, pointing at Jessie with his stick.

"No!" said Tom, stoutly, and beginning to grow indignant.

"Then," continued the old fellow, chuckling, and rubbing his hands together, and dropping first his stick and then his boots, which Jessie hastened to pick up, "I'll go and see Mr. Shingle to-night, and tell him; and I'll wait here till Richard Shingle comes home, and I'll tell him; and there'll be the devilishest devil of a row about it that ever was. You've no business here, and you know it, you scoundrel. She isn't good enough for you. You're to marry the fair Violante—the violent girl—he! he! he! ha! ha! ha! There'll be a storm for you to-night, young fellow; so look out."

"I'll trouble you to mind your own business, Mr. Hopper," exclaimed Tom, hotly.

"Hey?" said the old fellow, holding a boot up to his right ear, like a speaking trumpet.

"I say if you get interfering with my affairs, Mr. Hopper," cried Tom, angrily, and paying no heed to a whispered remonstrance from Jessie, "I'll——"

"I can't hear a word you say," said the old fellow. "Try the other side."

As he spoke, he held the other boot to his left ear, and leaned forward in a most irritating manner, grinning the while at the speaker.

"I say that if you dare to——"

"Tchsh! I can't hear a word if you mumble like that," snarled the old fellow. "Oh, be off with you, I've got no time to waste. I'm sixty, and if I'm lucky I've only got ten years to live. You're five and twenty, and got forty-five, so you are wasteful of your time, and spend it in running after girls who don't want you—like your beautiful brother Fred—bless him, for a sweet, handsome, pure-minded youth! Bless him! if I had any money to leave I'd put him down in my will for it—an artful, designing scoundrel!"

"Look here, Mr. Hopper," cried Tom, hotly, "you can abuse me as much as you like, and tell tales as much as you like, and play the sneak; but I won't stand here and hear my brother maligned."

"There, it's no use, I can't hear a word you say," grumbled the old fellow; "but it don't matter, I can see by your manner that you are abusing a poor helpless old fellow, the friend of your father and her father, and you are keeping her back, so that she'll be late with her parcel, and make her lose the work, and then you'll be happy."

"Confound——" began Tom. "Here, come along, Jessie," he cried, snatching her arm through his; and the old man stood chuckling to himself as he watched them out through the tunnel.

"He! he! he!—ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old fellow, as he made for the door with the red sign, and giving a sharp rap with his stick entered at once, nodding quietly at Mrs. Shingle.

"Here, I've brought Dick a job," he said, carrying the old pair of boots to the bench. "He's to do them directly, and they're to be sixpence—I won't pay another penny. Are you listening?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded, and went on with her work.

"He's to put a good big corn on the last of the left hand foot, and then cut away the leather, well wax a patch and put it on. My left foot hurts me horrid."

"You ought to have a new pair," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Hey?"

"You ought to have a new pair," she continued, a trifle more loudly.

"Have a new pair?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded.

"Bah! How can I afford a new pair? Times are hard. Ships' husbands don't make money like they used. New pair, indeed! They're good enough for me. Tell him to mend 'em well, and they are to be sixpence, d'yer hear?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded, with her silk in her mouth, gave it a twang, and went on.

"You'll break your teeth one of these days," said the old fellow, taking off his hat, placing it on his stick, and standing it in a corner. Then going in a slow, bent way to the well waxed and polished Windsor chair, he gave the chintz cushion a punch, took a long clay pipe off the chimney-piece, made it chirrup, reached an old leaden tobacco box from the same place, set it up on the table, and sat down.

"My teeth are used to it," said Mrs. Shingle, smiling pleasantly, as if she were quite accustomed to the old fellow's proceedings.

"Hey?"

"I say my teeth are used to it," repeated Mrs. Shingle.

"Oh! Don't shout. I say, this tobacco's as dry as a chip," he continued, filling his pipe.

Mrs. Shingle sighed.

"Dick's been going it awfully," grumbled the old fellow; "there was nearly half an ounce here last night."

Mrs. Shingle rose, took the matches from the chimney-piece, struck a light, and held it to the bowl of the pipe, when the visitor puffed the tobacco into a state of incandescence, and then subsided into his chair with a satisfied grunt, and sat staring straight before him, while Mrs. Shingle sighed, and went on with her stitching.

"I met those two," said the old fellow, after a pause.

Mrs. Shingle looked up sharply.

"Won't do," said her visitor.

"What won't do?"

"Hey?"

"I say, what won't do?" said Mrs. Shingle, colouring, and looking at him anxiously.

"I can hear you—don't shout," said the old fellow. "I say that won't do. Has Tom been here much?"

"No, not much," said Mrs. Shingle.

"I don't quite understand Tom," said the old fellow. "But I think he's a scamp."

"Indeed, I'm sure he's not!" cried Mrs. Shingle, excitedly.

"Sure he's not?" chuckled the old fellow.

"Of course. Just like you women. You take a fancy to a man, and the blacker he is the more you say he's white."

"I'm sure Tom is a very good, gentlemanly young fellow."

"Ha! ha! ha! Of course. But it won't do, Polly—it won't do."

"I don't see why it shouldn't do," said Mrs. Shingle, turning her head. "They're both young and nice-looking."

"Bah! will that fill their insides?" retorted the old fellow.

"And they're getting very fond of each other."

"More shame for you to let 'em," said the old boy, composedly. And his eyes twinkled with malicious glee as he saw the little woman begin to grow ruffled, like a mother hen, and the colour come into her wattles and comb.

"And pray why?" said Mrs. Shingle, loudly.

"Don't shout," said the old fellow. "Why, indeed! What will Max say when he knows of it?"

"Ah," sighed Mrs. Shingle, "what indeed!"

"He'll boil over in his cursed sanctified way, and kick Tom out of the house without a shilling."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear," said Mrs. Shingle, letting her work fall into her lap and wringing her hands; "that's what I've been thinking, and I've tried all I could to stop it; but the more I try, the fonder they get of one another."

"Of course they do. That's their way—the young fools," snarled the old fellow; "and if you let 'em alone, Jessie will marry the young noodle, fill his house full of children, and make him a poor man all his life."

"That wouldn't matter much if they were happy," sighed Mrs. Shingle.

"Same as you've kept poor old Dicky?"

"Indeed! and we never had but one little one," said Mrs. Shingle, indignantly.

"Hey?"

"I say we never had but one little one—Jessie," said Mrs. Shingle, indignantly.

"Gross piece of extravagance, too," snarled the old fellow. "You couldn't afford children."

"No, indeed," sighed Mrs. Shingle.

"And now you're encouraging that pretty young baggage, who coaxes and carneys round you, to get herself in the same mess, and then you'll be happy."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear, dear me! I wish I knew what to do," sighed Mrs. Shingle.

"What to do!" chorused the old fellow. "No business to have married. I didn't, and I've saved just enough to live on with strict economy; and see how happy I am."

"You don't seem to be," said Mrs. Shingle, tartly; "for you're always finding fault."

"Finding fault?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded.

"That's because I like it," chuckled the old fellow. "Makes me happy. Then I come and smoke a pipe here one day, and one at Max's another day; and you're both so glad to see me that it makes me happy too. Ha! you've spoiled that girl of yours, or she wouldn't go on like she does."

"I'm sure Jessie couldn't be a better behaved girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Shingle.

"Stuff! You never whipped her well, and Max never trained his boys. Good thing flogging! Makes the skin soft and elastic. Gives room to grow. Where's Dick?"

"Gone to his brother's."

"Gone to his brother's?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded.

"What's he gone there for?"

"Take home a pair of new boots."

"What! did Max give Dick an order for a new pair?"

Mrs. Shingle nodded.

"Wonderful! He! he! he! Max is getting more virtuous than ever. I'll praise him next time I go."

"No, don't—please," said Mrs. Shingle, earnestly. "Every little does help so just now; and we can't afford to offend Max."

"So you make traps, and put Jessie in for a bait, and try to catch his two boys, eh?"

"Indeed I did not," cried Mrs. Shingle; "it was all Tom's own doing."

"Ah, I dare say it was; but young Fred's always hanging about here too; and as soon as ever Max hears of it, there will be no end of a row. I shall put him on his guard."

"Pray say nothing!" cried Mrs. Shingle, imploringly.

"Why not? Best for both the young noodles to be brought to their senses."

"No, no; it would make them so unhappy. Let matters take their course. It will be quite time enough for the trouble to come when Maximilian finds it out for himself. Hush! here's Dick."

"That's right," snarled the old fellow—"woman all over. Keeping secrets from your husband. Glad I never married!"

Mrs. Shingle darted an indignant look at him, and no doubt a sharp retort was on her lips, but it was checked by a voice outside, and Richard Shingle, the occupant of the house, the mechanic who made boots and shoes and neatly executed repairs, entered the room, followed by his boy.

"Hallo, mother, here we are again, boots and all. Hallo, Hoppy, old man, how are you? Glad to see you. Too soon for the B flat yet; but you stop all day, and we'll polish that bit off to rights."

"How are you, Dick—how are you?" said the old man, quietly. And then re-filling his pipe, he lit up, half turned his back, and seemed to ignore that which followed, and to be totally ignored, on account of his deafness.

Richard Shingle was not an ill-looking man of forty; but he had a rather weak, vacillating expression of countenance, over which predominated a curious, puzzled look, which was due to something you could not make out. One moment you felt sure it was his eyes, but the next you said decidedly it was his mouth, while just as likely you set it down to his fair hair or his rather hollow cheeks, or the cock of his chin. The fact was, it was due to all his features, his figure, and his every attitude; for Richard Shingle, as he stood before you, seemed as if he had just taken you by the button-hole and said in full sincerity, as applied to the general scheme of life and man's position on earth:

"I say, what does it all mean?"

For he was one of those men who had never "got on." He said he wanted to get on, and he worked very hard; but the world was too much for him, and he was always left behind. If he had lived at the equator, where it is so hot, and man naturally feels inert, while the world races round at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, it is only natural to suppose that he might have been left behind; but it would have been just the same if Richard Shingle's existence had been upon the very Pole itself, north or south, where he would only have been called upon to turn once round in twenty-four hours. As he lived in that part of the temperate zone known as Islington, where the medium rate of progress is in force, it remained then, that not only could poor Dick never get ahead, but was always, in spite of his misplaced efforts, getting a little more and a little more behind.

And yet he looked a sharp, animated man, full of action, as on this occasion, when he bustled into the room, crying out—

"Hallo, mother, here we are again, boots and all!"

"But you've not brought them back again, Dick?" said Mrs. Shingle, looking anxiously up from her work.

"What do you call that, then?" said Dick, taking a blue bag from a doleful-looking, thin, white-faced boy with very short hair, and turning the receptacle upside down, so that the contents fell out on the floor with a bang.

"Oh, Dick!"

"He said they were the wussest-made pair of boots he ever see. And after all the pains as I took with 'em," said the speaker, dolefully, picking up one of the freshly-polished feet cases, and examining it.

"Oh, Dick, how tiresome!"

"And swore he couldn't get his feet into 'em—leastwise," he added, correctively, "he didn't swear—Max is too good to swear—he said as he couldn't get his feet in 'em."

"Tut—tut—tut!" ejaculated Mrs. Shingle, stitching away at her work.

"He blowed me up fine; said I wasn't fit to shoe a horse, let alone a Christian man. When—look at 'em. Did you ever see a prettier pair, eh, Hoppy?" he shouted.

The old man glanced at the boots and grunted, turning away again directly.

"Look at 'em, mother—rights and lefts, and the soles polished off smooth; and see how prettily they put out their tongues at you, all lined with a bit o' scarlet basil. Called me a cobbler, too, he did; and after laying myself out on the artistic tack, so as to get his future patronage, and that of his two boys."

"Oh, Dick, Dick!"

"Yes, it is 'Oh, Dick, Dick!' Bad, too, as we want the money. Wouldn't fit you, I suppose, Hoppy."

"Hey?"

"I say they wouldn't fit you, would they? You should have 'em cheap."

"Bah, no! I couldn't wear boots like these. Couldn't afford it—couldn't afford it. There's a pair for you to mend."

"All right, old man—all right; I'll do 'em. Of course they wouldn't do for you," he continued; "bad, too, as we want the money. Said it was what always came of employing relatives; but he did it out of charitable feeling—so as to give me a lift. Called me a bungler, too, when, look here, mother, how nicely I made a little mountain on that side to hold his bunion, and a little Greenwich-hill on that side to accommodate his favourite corn. Blow my rags, mother, if it aint too bad! That's working for relations, that is. Dressed up a bit, too, this morning to take 'em home, so as not to disgrace him by looking too shabby, and made Union Jack walk behind to carry the blue bag, same as if I was a sooperior kind of tradesman, and his servants shouldn't look down on me. Said I was Mr. Richard Shingle, too, when the boy opened the door. But it was all no go. Another of my failures, old gal. Tell you what it is, mother, it'll be what the drapers call a terrific crash if it goes on like this."

"But Dick, dear, you don't mean that he won't have the boots at all?"

"That's just what I do mean. He's shied 'em on my hands. 'Taint as if he'd shied them on my feet."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" ejaculated Mrs. Shingle.

"Dear!" said Dick, trying to raise a feeble laugh. "That's just what they are."

I can't afford to wear a pair of handsome boots like them. Only look at 'em. Leather cost me nine shillings before I put in a stitch."

"I declare, it's too bad, Dick," whimpered Mrs. Shingle; "and us so badly off too. Brother, indeed! He's worse than—"

"There, that'll do," said Dick, taking off his coat. "Don't you get letting on about him, mother, because he is my brother, you know. Blood is thicker than water."

"I don't see what that's got to do with it, Dick, if it's ten times as thick," said Mrs. Shingle, stabbing away at her bootbinding as if the kid leather were Maximilian Shingle's skin, and she was serving him out.

"No, you don't," said Dick, rolling up his sleeves, and tying on his leather apron, before going to the chimney glass, and putting a piece of ribbon round his rather long hair, apparently to embellish his countenance, but really to keep the hair out of his eyes when he bent down over his work. "No, mother; that's because you're put out, and cross, and won't see it; but blood is thicker than water, aint it, Hoppy?"

"Hey?" said the old fellow, taking his pipe out of his mouth.

"I say blood is thicker than water, aint it?"

"Ever so much," growled the old fellow, going on with his smoking; while Dick, glancing over his shoulder, and seeing that his wife's attention was taken up with the binding, slipped a half-ounce packet of tobacco into his old friend's hand, with a nod and a wink, to indicate that the strictest secrecy must be observed.

"Yes," continued Dick, retiring towards his bench; "that's what I always say—brothers is brothers, and blood's thicker than water. And as to Max—well, it's a way he's got, and he can't help it."

"Stuff!" ejaculated Mrs. Shingle, sharply.

"No, no, mother, it aint stuff neither; so don't talk like that. Here, you sir," he cried to the boy, who was standing staring from one to the other, "get to work, you luxurious young rascal. That aint the way to improve your shining hours. Wax up and get ready a pair of fine points to mend them old shoes."

"All right, master," said the boy.

And, slipping off his threadbare jacket, he sat down on a stool, and began to unwind a ball of hemp.

"I don't believe in such brothers," said Mrs. Shingle, bitterly. "Brothers, indeed!"

"No, that's it, mother; it's because you are a bit put out. But you'll see it in the right light soon, for blood is thicker than water. Ah!" he continued, re-arranging the band round his forehead; and then, catching sight of a letter tucked behind the glass, "Now, if old Uncle Rounce's money—or present, as he calls it—would drop in now, it would be welcome."

As he spoke he opened the letter, which was written on thin paper, and bore Australian postmarks, and began to read aloud—

"Thinking that a little money might be useful, I have sent you a present'—and so on. Now, I wonder when that money's coming."

"Never," said Mrs. Shingle, tartly.

"Now, there's where you are so wrong, mother," said Dick. "It's very kind of the old fellow, who must have got on famously to be able to send us a few pounds—it's sure to be pounds when it does come."

"And it won't never come," said Mrs. Shingle; "for you've had that letter nine months."

"Well, if it don't, mother, it don't, that's all; but what I say is, blood is thicker than water, or else old Uncle Sol—as I never see, only heard on—wouldn't have said he'd send me a present—would he, Hoppy?"

"Hey?"

"I say Uncle Rounce wouldn't have said he'd send me a present if blood warn't thicker than water."

"No. Have you got it yet?" said the old fellow.

"No, not yet. I asked Max about it, and he said he didn't believe it would come."

"He said that, did he?"

"Yes, he said that," replied Dick, doubling the letter again, and replacing it behind the old looking-glass. "I dessay it'll come, though, some day."

"You had better try and sell those boots at once," said Mrs. Shingle, rather im-

patiently, and as if she had not much faith in the coming money.

"Sell 'em?" said Dick, rather down on his luck. "Yes; but who's to buy 'em? There's only two feet in London as will fit 'em, and they're Max's."

"I declare it's too bad, Dick dear, and we so pressed for money. The rent's due, you know. Rolling in riches, as he is, and to behave so to his poor brother, who works so hard."

"Gently, mother, gently; it's only a way he's got. But I do work pretty hard, don't I?—only I'm so unlucky."

"Why don't you make a good dash at something, instead of plodding, then?" said Hopper, suddenly.

"Come, now," cried Dick, with an ill-used look and tone, "don't you turn round on me like that, Hoppy, old man. We're too good friends for that. It's what Max always says; and I aint clever, so how can I?"

Hopper relapsed into silence.

"There, there, I shall get over it," continued Dick, working away; "and as to rolling in riches, why, Max can't help rolling in riches, any more than I can help rolling in nothing. It's his way. But I say, mother, if we had riches, I think I could roll in 'em with the best."

"Don't talk nonsense, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle, "when we're so worried too. There," she added, in a whisper, as their visitor rose, "we're driving him away."

"Going, Hoppy, old man?" said Dick, as their visitor rose and laid aside his pipe.

"Yes, going now," said the old fellow. "I'll drop in, perhaps, in the evening."

"We haven't put you out, have we?" said Dick.

"No, no, my lad; it's all right. Dick, just lend me sixpence. My money is not due till Monday."

Dick's countenance fell, and he glanced at his wife.

"Have you got a sixpence, Polly?" he said.

"Not one," was the reply.

"I'm very sorry, Hoppy, old man," said Dick, looking more puzzled than ever, and as if this time he really could not understand why he should be so poor and his brother so rich—"but really I haven't got it."

"Never mind," said the old fellow—"never mind; I dare say I can do without."

And, grumbling and muttering, he took up his hat and stick, and went off, apparently in what Dick called "a huff."

CHAPTER III.

DICK ON HIS BENCH.

NOW he's put out," said Dick, looking puzzled at his wife. "I did not mean to upset him; but a man can't lend another man what he hasn't got, can he, mother?"

There was no answer—only the clicking of Mrs. Shingle's needle against her thimble.

"I say a man can't lend what he hasn't got, can he, mother?" said Dick again, as he bent over some strange performance that he was achieving with an awl and some wax-end.

"I wasn't thinking of that, Dick," said his

wife, with a sigh; "but of the money for the boots."

"There, you needn't fidget about that," said Dick, throwing out his arms so as to draw the wax-end tight; "for we shouldn't have had the money if he had kept the boots."

"Not had the money?"

"No—he meant to keep it for the rent. He said so."

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Shingle. "Well, that comes of having your brother for your landlord. He's as hard again as any one else."

"Well, Max always was a hard one, certainly, my dear. Ever since we were boys

together, 'Merry, merry boys—since we were boys together,'" he sang. Then, descending once more to everyday life conversation, he went on, "He was a hard one, Max was; and as to money, he'd always have a penny or twopence when I had none, even if he borrowed it of me."

"And never paid it again," said his wife, contemptuously.

"Well, it was a way he had," said Dick.

"I haven't patience with him."

"No, my dear, you never did have patience with Max. But I say, mother—Can't you go on with your work, you young rascal? What are you opening those ears like that for, you young dog, eh?"

"Please, master, I couldn't help hearing," said the boy, dolefully. "I'm a learning my trade, and trying to obey my pastors and masters as hard as ever I can."

"Now, lookye here," said Dick, taking up his hammer, and gazing threateningly at the boy, "I never have given it to you yet, John Johnson, or, as I familiarly call you, from where you came and the stripes you had on you when you came, Union Jack—"

"No, master," whined the thin boy, "you've been very kind indeed to me." And, as he spoke, he seemed to be thin even to transparency.

"I have, you hungry young alligator," said Dick. "So look here, I won't have it; I'm as bad as Mr. Hopper that way—I hate people to preach at me, and sling catechism at me; so don't you do it again."

"No, master; please, I'll try very hard indeed, and obey you, as it is my dooty to."

"Will you leave off?" roared Dick, striking his bench with the hammer, so that the tools and nails jumped almost as much as the boy. "You're at it again, talking in that canting, whining, tread-under-foot, work-house style, and I won't have it. What did I tell you you was?"

"A free-born Briton, please, master."

"Then why don't you act as such," cried Dick, "and say 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' outright and down straight?—not whine and grovel like a worm without any sting in his tail."

"Please, master, I'll try and order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters."

"Now, just hark at him!" cried Dick to his wife.

"Please, master, I'm very—"

"Ah!" shouted Dick.

"All right, master," said the boy; and he bent to his work.

"I say, mother," said Dick, "Max is a bit put out with us."

"So it seems," said Mrs. Shingle, biting her silk and stitching away. "I think he'd be glad if we starved to death."

"Well, I don't know about that, my girl, because it wouldn't be nice to look at, and he never liked unpleasant things; but he's a bit put out about our Jess."

"What?" said Mrs. Shingle, turning very red.

"About our Jess," said Dick, hammering away very viciously at an inoffensive-looking bit of leather. "He's got to know about his boys being so fond of coming here."

"Our Jessie's as good as his boys," said Mrs. Shingle, sharply, and ready to stand her ground, now that the murder was out.

"So she is, my gal—so she is, every bit; but she's only copper, and they're silver-gilt in his eyes, if they aint gold. Here, you sir, you're listening again, instead of working," he shouted to the boy, who began to gum his hands liberally with wax, and roll the threads on his lath-like knees. "But Max has been on to me about it, and he says he won't have it; and I always told them so, 'specially Tom. 'Tom,' I says, 'your governor won't like your coming here,' I says; 'and he'll think all sorts of things about it.'"

"Just as if money need make any difference," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle.

"It needn't, my gal," said Dick, grunting over his work; "but it do—it makes all the difference; you see if it don't. For if you don't go off with that bit of shoe-binding of yours, and bring back the money, we sha'n't get any dinner, and that's very different to having it. But where's Jessie?"

"Gone to the warehouse."

"What, all alone! Now, look here, mother—I won't have it. She's too young and pretty to go there all alone, and I won't have her left to be followed and annoyed by counter-jumpers, and that fellow as gives out the work. You know she come home

crying on Friday. Why didn't you go with her?"

"I had this to finish, Dick."

"You've always got *this* to finish," said Dick, testily. "Then you should have kept her till I came back."

"But it would have been too late, Dick. Where are you going?" she cried, as he rose and began to untie his apron.

"To meet her," he exclaimed, angrily.

"But she hasn't gone alone, Dick," said the wife, softly.

"If you've let her go there with that Fred, Polly, I'll never forgive you," cried Dick.

"She's gone with Tom, dear."

"Tom, dear, indeed! It isn't 'Tom, dear,' and it isn't going to be 'Tom, dear,'" exclaimed Dick, re-tying his apron viciously.

"But he came, dear, just as she was starting, and he begged so hard that I was obliged to let him go."

"There you go!" cried Dick, hammering again at the piece of unoffending leather. "You'll ruin me before you've done. Here's Max says only this morning, says he, 'I won't have that gal of yours hanging about after my sons.' He said '*gal*,' and 'my sons.' And I, feeling a bit up, says back, 'Lookye here, Max, I can't help your *boys* coming to my house. I'm not going to send my *daughter* away.' I think that was pretty sharp on him, you know; when, 'Damn your impudence,' he says.—Look here, Jack," continued Dick, pointing at the boy with his hammer, "I promised the work-house authorities as I'd bring you up moral, so don't you go telling anybody as your master swears, because that was some one else."

"All right, master," said the boy.

"That's better," cried Dick; "don't whine. Well, mother, then he gets in a towering rage, and showed me what was the matter with the boots. 'They'd got Jessie in 'em; that's where they wouldn't fit.' 'How dare you speak to me in that familiar way, sir?' he says, sticking himself out and looking big like a poor-law guardian. 'When I employ you, sir, as an humble tradesman, I desire you pay me proper respect.' And now, mother, you've been and made worse of it. Blow my rags

if I don't turn burglar, or something to make money, if things don't mend. I'm sick of being poor."

"No, don't please, master," said the boy, with a whine. "Honesty's the best policy. And he who steals comes to a bad end."

"Now, just look here, young fellow," cried Dick, with a serio-comic look on his face, as he took up his hammer once more, "burglary's bad enough, but killing's worse. There was a man once who had a boy from a workus, just as I've had you, to teach you a trade—"

"Yes, master," said the boy, with eyes and mouth wide open.

"Well, he killed him with ill-usage, that's all," continued Dick. "I shouldn't like to kill you, you know, so don't you get chucking any more of your copy-book texes at me again."

"All right, master," said the boy, wiping his eyes.

"Now, look here, mother—once for all, I won't have it. I'm as poor as I can be to get along, and though we've swallowed my watch, and the sugar-tongs and spoons, I haven't swallowed my little bit of pride; and the next time that Tom or that Fred comes here, see if I don't call him a son of a purse-proud, stuck-up father, and slam the door in his face. Now, you be off."

"Yes, Dick," said his wife, meekly; and she rose and gathered together her work. "But, Dick, you're not very cross with me?"

"Well, perhaps not," he said; and his eyes endorsed his words.

"But, look here, Dick; if Tom comes back with Jessie, you won't say anything unkind to him—for her sake."

"Won't I?" cried Dick, sharply. "I'll shy the lapstone at him! If he's too good for my Jessie, she's too good for him."

"But don't hurt their feelings, Dick," she whispered, so that the boy should not hear.

"I don't want to hurt her feelings," said Dick, yielding to his wife's influence. "But there, you're trying to come round me again, as you always do, and I won't have it. Now be off."

"Yes, Dick—I'm going," she said, meekly, as she put on her bonnet and shawl. "But I know you won't be unkind."

"Won't I?" said Dick, as the door closed.

"I'll show some of them yet! I can be a regular savage when I like—can't I, Jack?"

"Please, what did you say, master?" whined the boy.

"I can be a regular savage when I like—can't I?" shouted Dick.

"Yes, master. Please, master, I'm so hungry."

"So what?" half shrieked Dick.

"So hungry, please, master."

"Hungry? Why, the boy's mad!" cried Dick, looking up in mock astonishment. "How dare you, sir? Hungry, indeed! There, take that wax out of your mouth. You're always trying to ruin me by eating the wax or chewing leather."

"I can't help it, master," said the boy. "Please, I'm so hungry."

"Hungry!" exclaimed Dick, with mock heroic diction. "Brought up, too, as you were, at one of the first workhouses in the kingdom!"

"Please, master, I can't help it," said the boy. "I feel so hollow inside."

"Hollow? Nonsense, sir! It's bad tendencies, or desire for gluttony and wine-bibbing. And after I've been such a good master to you!"

"Yes, master; and I'll never, never, never—"

"'Never, never, never shall be slaves,'" sang Dick, in a musical tenor voice. "But don't you say that, Jack, my boy; because if you keep on running out of your trousers as you do, and looking like something growing out of two beans, which is your boots, and then joining in the middle and running up to a head, I sha'n't want you, specially if you're going to be hollow, and want filling out."

"But I don't want filling out, master, only just a little sometimes. I can't help feeling hollow, and as if something was gnawing me."

"Gnawing? Yes, that's it," cried Dick. "I always told you so. Brought up, too, as you were in the first of unions, and yet such is the wickedness of your nature, that you will devour your food in such a way that it don't digest; and that's what you feel, sir—gnawing pains. There, fix up them bristles. You aint hungry."

"It feels very much like as I used to feel

at the workus, master," said the boy. "We all of us used to feel hollow there sometimes on rice days. I can't help it, please, master."

"Now, lookye here, my fine fellow, it won't do, so I tell you. I'm your master, aint I?"

"Yes, please," said the boy, making a scoop with his hand.

"Leave off! I won't have it!" cried Dick. "You aint to bow to me. I say as your master I ought to know best, and I say you aint hungry; and, look here, don't you chew wax and leather any more, because they're my property, and you'll be tempted to swallow them, when it will not only be petty larceny, but they'll disagree with you. Now, go on sorting out the best o' them bits o' leather."

"Yes, master," said the boy.

Dick rose from his bench, and went to the cupboard to see if there was a crust of bread and some butter to give to the boy; but it was quite empty, and he began to walk up and down, talking to himself.

"It's very hard," he muttered, dolefully; "but the more I try to get on the more I don't, and if things don't mend God knows what's to become of us. Poor Polly! she frets a deal, only she hides it; and as for Jessie— There, there, there, I can't bear to think of it!" he groaned. "I must have been a fool, and so can't get on."

He scuffled back to his seat, for a familiar step was heard in the court; and, taking up his work, he began to sing merrily, after adjuring the boy to go on ahead.

"Hallo, mother," he cried, as Mrs. Shingle entered the room. "What have you brought—sausages?"

"No, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle, sadly; "they don't pay till next week."

"Don't pay for a week!" said Dick, letting his hands drop, but recovering himself directly. "All right!" he cried, "so much in store. 'Cheer up, Sam, and don't let your spirits go down,'" he sang. "I say, mother, aint it time that Jessie was back?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle, sadly, "she'll be back soon. It's very hard, though, and it seems as if it never rained but it poured."

"Never does," said Dick, cheerily; "'So put up your gingham and drive away care,'"

he sang. "Hang it, mother, I hope it won't really rain before she comes back. Did she take the big umbrella?"

"No, father," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Ah, bad job; but never mind, perhaps it won't rain. Go along, Jack, my lad, you don't feel hollow inside now, do you?"

"Yes, please, master, ever so much hollower," said the boy, pitifully.

"I never see such a boy," cried Dick.

"Here, open the door, mother—it's Jessie. Hallo, my gal!" he cried, jumping up. "What's the matter?"

"Oh, father, father!" sobbed the girl, running to his arms.

"Why, my precious!" he exclaimed, patting her cheek, "what is it? Has any one dared? Oh that's it, is it?" he muttered, for his brother, closely followed by Tom Shingle, entered the room.

CHAPTER IV.

A BROTHERS' QUARREL.

MAXIMILIAN SHINGLE was a heavy, broad-faced man, very cleanly shaven, and with grey hair very smoothly brushed. His black suit was as glossy as a first-class undertaker's, and he always wore an old-style bunch of seals, with which he played as he spoke, spinning them round, while his other hand flourished a black ebony stick, with a gold top and a good deal of tassel.

Metaphorically speaking, there was a good deal of tassel about Maximilian, for he swung and flourished about in his words and deeds, and always seemed to be more showy than substantial; and even now, when he was very white, and evidently in a towering passion, he flourished his seals and stick, and turned threateningly upon his brother; whilst the boy, who seemed to see in him a good deal of the workhouse official or Poor-law guardian, softly stole into the back room, and surveyed the proceedings through the crack of the door. In fact, the moment you saw Max Shingle, you said to yourself, "What a splendid man for a beadle!" And so he was: put him in uniform, and he would have been simply perfect, from the soft roll of fat under his chin to the well-turned calf of his leg, which showed so prominently through his well-cut trousers. His very appearance aggravated you, and caused an itching beneath the nail of your right toe, for he was one of those men whom

nature out of pure beneficence moulded to be kicked as a relief to abnormal irritation. His appearance at every turn suggested it, inasmuch as he was padded with tissue of the most elastic nature, such as would yield easily to the foot, and thus the kicker would run no risks either of hurting himself or committing homicide, while he obtained the satisfaction of kicking all the same.

"Now, sir," began Max, fiercely addressing his brother, "what have you to say?"

"Well, I don't know yet," said Dick, looking in a puzzled way from one to the other. "What is it?"

"Don't know!" cried Max. "Didn't I speak to you, sir, an hour or two back?"

"Was it an hour or two back?" said Dick, who still held and soothed Jessie, as she clung to him.

"Yes, it was, sir!" cried Max, who was surprised that his brother did not cower, according to his wont. "I told you an hour or two ago that I would not have these disgraceful proceedings."

"What disgraceful proceedings?" said Dick, sullenly.

"These," cried Max, pointing with his stick, first at Jessie and then at Tom. "I speak to you, and warn you——"

"Let me say a word, father."

"Hold your tongue, sir!" cried Max, holding up his stick; but the young man did not flinch. "I say I speak to you and warn you, and directly after I find your girl arm-in-arm with this foolish son of mine in the open street, sir—in the open street."



"I'LL CARRY THE PARCEL."—(Page 12.)

"Well, Max, you can't have the streets shut up," said Dick, quietly.

"How dare you address me, sir, like that?" cried Max.

"Father, will you listen?" cried Tom, who was losing patience—"it was all my fault."

"Silence, sir, I will not hear a word. Your conduct is disgraceful, and after the Christian example that has been set you—"

"I don't see anything unchristianlike in loving a good, sweet girl, father," said the young man, stoutly. "I cannot stand here and let you speak like this."

"Then go, sir, go, and never dare to enter beneath this roof again while these people are here," cried Max. "I suppose you have had baits set to coax you into the trap, you silly pigeon."

"Indeed, father—"

"But let me tell them all," said Max, looking round with supreme disgust, "that if their nefarious scheme had succeeded, you would not have received a shilling from me."

Dick broke in here. He had been ready to explode several times, but had been kept back by wife and child. Now he could contain himself no longer.

"Here, let me say a word," he exclaimed. "He hasn't been coaxed here, nor nothing of the sort, Mr. Max. We don't want him, and won't have him; so there now."

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Jessie.

"You hold your tongue, miss," cried Dick, "and just try and have some pride in you."

"How dare you speak to me like that, sir?" cried Max, frowning portentously—"how dare you? You, whom I've tried so hard to raise out of the mud, but who always would persist in grovelling!"

"I shouldn't have had to grovel so much if people paid me for the boots they ordered," said Dick.

"You contemptible wretch!" cried Max. "You cloven-hoofed viper, who persists in turning and biting the hand that helped you! And after all we meant to do for you to try and raise you!—to endeavour to clothe and educate your neglected child, whose conduct as a work-girl is most reprehensible."

"Look here, Max," cried Dick, whose face was working with anger.

"Silence, sir!" cried Max, thumping his stick upon the floor. "You grow lower and lower year by year, and now try to reward me by making this despicable plan to drag yourself up to my level. Now, look here. I've warned you, and it has been of no use. I have let you occupy this house, when I might have had a better tenant, and you have got in arrears."

"Only two weeks," cried Mrs. Shingle, indignantly.

"Silence, woman!" cried Max.

"Don't you call her a woman, Max, or there'll be a row," exclaimed Dick.

"Silence, both of you!" cried Max. "I say I've let you get in arrears of rent for my property, and now you shall leave it. I'll let the house to honest people who will pay—"

"Oh, Mr. Max!" cried Mrs. Shingle, imploringly.

"And then," continued Max, "I shall see the last of you, and have no more of these disgraceful meetings."

"Father, this is too bad," cried Tom.

"Silence, boy!" said Max, placing one hand in the breast of his glossy frock coat, and scowling round at all in turn. "Does any one here think I'd disgrace my honourable house by such an alliance?"

"Nice brotherly behaviour, this!" cried Dick, indignantly.

"Brotherly?" cried Max. "Sir, I disown all relationship with you. You've hung on to my skirts too long, and now I'll be free of you. Miserable, grovelling beggar."

"I never begged or borrowed of you," said Dick.

"No; because I checked the impulse, or I should have had to keep you. And now you want to disgrace me and mine."

"I'm sure no man could have been more industrious," put in Mrs. Shingle.

"Industrious?" cried Max, looking round at the shabby half workshop, half sitting-room. "Industrious? Yes, always idling in his wretched slough, instead of trying to improve his position—to get on; but I'll have no more of it. Leave this place you shall at once."

"Oh, Mr. Shingle—Uncle Max!" cried

Jessie, piteously; "it was all my fault. I ought to have known better. Don't turn poor father and mother out. They work and try so hard."

"Bah!" ejaculated Max, contemptuously; while Tom made for Jessie, but his father laid his heavy arm across his chest.

"Don't, pray don't," sobbed Jessie, joining her hands and looking piteously up in the smooth, smug face. "Don't do that, and I'll promise never to see—never to see Tom. No, no; I can't—I can't—I can't," she cried, bursting into an agony of weeping.

"You shall promise no such thing, Jessie—dear cousin," cried Tom in a manly way, as, extricating himself from his father, he stepped up to her side and tried to take her hand, but she shrank from him and clung to her mother. "Jessie," he exclaimed, "as I'm a man, I'll be true to you in spite of everything."

"This is your work," cried Max, furiously, as he turned to his brother. "Do you see now what you have done?"

"That was well spoke, Tom Shingle, and I never thought better of you than I do now," said Dick, rousing himself, though his face looked more perplexed than ever. "But I've had enough of this here. You and your father belong to the swells, and I'm a poor working man. You two are ile, and floats on the top—we're only water, and goes to the bottom; but p'raps the water's got as much pride in it as the ile, and so's my poor girl, when she's got her bit of sorrow over. Tom Shingle, you're no match for her."

Max gave a loud, contemptuous laugh, which made Mrs. Shingle look up as if she would wither him.

"Not," continued Dick, "but what she's the best and purest girl in the whole world, though I as her father says it."

Dick took up his hammer in a helpless, meaningless way, and turned it over and over, examining the handle and the head, and gazed from one to the other, as if asking their opinion about the quality of the tool.

"I don't think I was ever so hard up in my life," continued Dick—"and mother here will bear me out if I don't speak what's good as Gorspel; but afore I'd stay under

this here roof more than another week, I'd take the whole lot into the workus, and grow hollow like my poor boy here."

There was a half stifled howl from the back room, but no one paid any heed.

"You needn't be afraid, Mr. Maximilian Shingle, as your poor shoemaker of a brother, as has been unlucky all his life, and never see the way to get up the ladder without shouldering and pulling some one else down, which wasn't his way, will ever trouble you again, nor let your boys come hanging about after his poor, dear gal. I never encouraged it, and never shall. Some day, p'raps, you'll come yourself and ask for it to be."

"I ask!" cried Max—"a common sempstress, an impudent drab!"

"Father!" cried Tom, starting forward, and laying his hand upon his mouth.

"Silence, sir!" shouted Max, who, roused by the opposition he had received, struck at his son with his tasselled cane. "I said an impudent, bold-faced drab!"

"Stop!" roared Dick, from whose face the puzzled look seemed to have departed, to give place to one of angry decision, and he stepped, hammer in hand, close up to his brother. "Look here, Max," he cried, in a low, hoarse voice, "I don't want to play Cain, and there aint much of the Abel about you; but my poor girl here"—he placed his arm round her as he spoke, and she hid her hot, indignant face upon his shoulder—"my poor gal here, I say, once read to me when she was a little one about a blacksmith knocking a man down with his hammer because he insulted his daughter. Now, you've insulted my dear, sweet gal, as the very poorest and lowest labourer about here has a respectful word for, and even the very costers at the stalls; and you've made my blood bile—poor, and thin, and beggarly as it is. So, now then, this is my house till I leaves it. I aint Wat Tyler and you aint a tax-gatherer, and if you aint gone in half a moment I'll give you what for."

"You scoundrel—you shall repent this!" cried Max, shaking his stick.

But Dick made at him so menacingly that he hurried out of the house.

"Uncle," began Tom, who had stopped behind.

"After your father, sir!"

"But, uncle," he cried.

"After your father!" cried Dick, sternly. "I won't hear a word. No, nor you sha'n't touch her. Jessie, say good-bye to him, and there's an end of it. We'll emigrate."

"Oh, father, what have I done?" cried Jessie.

"Nothing, Jessie, but what is right, my own darling; and here, before your father and mother—"

"Tom!" shouted Max from without.

"I swear," continued Tom, "that I'll never give you up."

"That'll do," said Dick, uncompromisingly. "He's calling you. Out of my house."

"Uncle," said Tom, "when you are cooler you'll think better of me, I hope. I can't help this. I do love Jessie dearly."

"I won't hear a word," cried Dick.

"But you'll shake hands with me, uncle?"

"No; I'm a poor shoemaker, and your father's made you a gentleman. Be off."

"Oh, father! father!" cried Jessie; and she flung her arms round his neck.

"No, I won't give way," cried Dick; but he was patting and soothing his child as he spoke.

"Shake hands with him, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle. "It aint his fault."

"I WON'T!" cried Dick. "It is his fault. He had no business to come."

"No, father, it was my fault," sobbed Jessie. "Shake hands with him—please do!"

All this while Tom was standing with extended hand; and at last Dick's went out to join it for a moment, and was then snatched away.

"Good bye, dear Jessie," said Tom then; "but mind, I shall keep to my word."

"Is that scoundrel coming?" said Max from without.

Dick made a vicious "offer," as if to throw his hammer at the door; but Mrs. Shingle took it from his hand.

"I'm coming," said Tom, loudly; and then, taking Jessie's hand, he kissed it tenderly, and, as the poor girl began to sob piteously, he hurried out of the house, and was gone.

CHAPTER V.

FRED IS BUSY.

HE offices of Maximilian Shingle were on the first floor, in a narrow turning close to the Royal Exchange; and, though they were dark and inconvenient, they were handsomely furnished, as befitted a suite of three rooms for which a heavy rent was paid. The outer room was occupied by four clerks, the second room was allotted to Fred Shingle, and the inner sanctum was Max's own.

A morning or two after the visit to Crowder's-buildings, Fred Shingle was seated at his table, with a small open book before him—one which evidently had nothing to do with stockbroking; but he was studying it so hard that the lines were deeply marked upon his effeminate face.

Twice over he started, and closed it hastily, as he heard a step outside; but after listening for a few moments, he resumed his task, and kept on with his study for some time, when he closed the little memorandum book with a sigh, placed it carefully in his pocket, and then, opening a drawer, he took out some doubled blotting paper, between which, on opening it, lay some tracing paper and an old bill of exchange.

Placing this convenient to his hand, he also took a large blotter, arranged in it a sheet of paper, and wrote in the date and some half-dozen lines, before moving blotter and letter into a handy position.

This done, he listened for a few moments, and then taking the tracing paper and bill, began to go over the signature very carefully, writing it again and again, beginning

at the top of his tracing paper, and forming a column of signatures.

Then there was a knock at the door; and as Fred cried "Come in!" the blotter was drawn deftly over the tracing paper, and he went on writing the letter.

A clerk brought in a couple of letters to be signed, and this being done he retired, when Fred resumed his task, working away patiently, and always going over the writing again.

This went on for half an hour or so, when the young man started, and hastily drew the blotter over his work; for the door had been opened very slowly and quietly, and in a heavy, noiseless way, old Hopper entered the room.

"How do, Fred?" he said, approaching the table slowly.

"How do?" was the short, sharp reply. "What does he want?" he muttered.

"Hey?"

"I say what hot weather," shouted Fred.

"Don't shout, I'm not so deaf as all that," said the old fellow, hastily. "Father in his room?"

"Yes," said Fred, "he's in there."

"Hey?"

"I say he's in there," roared the young man.

"I wish you wouldn't shout so, my lad," said the old man, sourly. "I don't want the drums of my ears split. I could hear what you said. And how is the dear, sweet, good man, eh?"

"Same as usual," replied Fred, with a grin.

"Ah!" said Hopper, "you ought to be a very good young man, having such a father."

"I am," replied Fred, with a grin.

"Hey?"

"I say I am," shouted Fred.

"So I suppose," said the old fellow, chuckling, and looking at him with a strange expression of countenance. "Well, tell him I want to see him."

Ting!

There was the sharp sound of a gong heard in the next room, and Fred rose to answer it. He glanced first at the old man, and then down at his letter; but a second stroke on the gong made him hurry to the inner door, which he opened, and stood

with his head half inside; but a few sharp peremptory words were heard, and he went in and closed the door, leaving Mr. Hopper waiting.

Fred was not gone many minutes, and when he returned it was to find the visitor had taken a chair, and was busy over the contents of a bulky pocket-book, which he secured as the young man appeared, and returned to the pocket in the breast of his ugly, ill-cut dress-coat.

"He says you can go in, but he can only give you ten minutes," said Fred.

"Won't see me for ten minutes?" said the old fellow.

"Says you may go in for ten minutes," shouted the young man; and then, in quite a whisper, "Confounded old nuisance!"

Old Hopper turned half round, and gave him a peculiar leer, shaking his head and chuckling to himself as he went slowly towards the door of Max Shingle's office, putting down his stick heavily in the recurring pattern of the floor-cloth, closely followed by Fred, who showed him in.

"What the governor has that deaf old beetle hanging about him for I can't make out," said the young man, returning to his seat; and he was about to continue his task when a fresh knock at the door made him hastily thrust his papers into the drawer of the table, lock it, and take out the key.

"Ah, my dear Hopper, how are you?" said Max, smiling amiably, and making his eyes beam upon his visitor.

"Hey? How am I?" snarled the old fellow, giving his stick a thump on the floor. "What's that to you? I'm not dying yet. Aint you sorry?"

"Sorry? Heaven forbid!" said Max, unctuously, as he shook his head reproachfully at his visitor, and then, taking hold of his watch ribbon, threw himself back in his chair, and began to spin the seals round and round.

"Don't! Be quiet!" cried Hopper, thrusting out the point of his stick, so that the seals stuck upon it and were arrested in their motion. "Think I'm not bilious enough with looking at you, without having that thing spun round in my face?"

Max laughed, but looked annoyed; while the old fellow took a seat unasked.

"What can I do for you?" said Max at last, smiling blandly.

"Give me a glass of wine. I'm hot and tired."

"Really, I—" began Max.

"It's in that stand," said the old fellow, chuckling, as he pointed with his stick at a handsome mahogany cellarette at one end of the room, when Max, whose smile was tempered a good deal with a look of annoyance, rose, sighed, secured the door with a little bolt, and then unlocked the cellarette and took out a decanter and glass.

"No, thank you, I don't smoke cigars," said the old fellow, as he watched the sherry poured into the glass. "Hey! You weren't going to offer me one? Ho! I was afraid you were."

Max had not spoken, but he winced as he heard these words—preserving his smile, though, as he turned his face to his visitor and passed the wine.

"Not bad, Max—not bad," said the old fellow, tasting the sherry and smacking his lips before pouring the rest down his throat. "How you must mug yourself here. Lucky dog, lucky dog! Now, if I had taken to stockbroking instead of ship's husbanding, I might have been as well off as you."

"Oh, dear, no; I'm not well off," said Max.

"Hey?"

"I say I'm not well off," said Max, more loudly.

"That's a pity," said the old fellow. "Never mind, I'll have another glass, all the same. Fill it full this time."

Max shut his teeth with a snap, but he filled the glass brimming full, and then re-stopped the decanter.

"So you're not well off, hey?" said Hopper.

"Very, very short," said Max, with his mouth close to his visitor's ear.

"Humph! Sorry to hear it, because I want to borrow five pounds of you," said Hopper. "You've got that, I suppose?"

"Indeed, no. I'm very sorry," began Max.

"So am I," said the old fellow, shortly. "Hah, Max Shingle, how you'd have liked to stick a dose of poison in that wine, wouldn't you?"

"Really, Mr. Hopper," began Max, indignantly, and he half rose.

But the old man laid his stick upon his shoulder like a sceptre, and forced him down.

"Sit still, stupid!" cried the old man. "I know what you are going to say. Surprised at my making such remarks, and so on. But you would like to, and I believe you'd do it if it was not for the fear of the law. I say, Max," he chuckled, "it would take a strong new rope to hang you."

Max laid his hands upon the arms of his handsome, well-stuffed easy chair, and turned of a pale dough colour, as he glared at his visitor.

"I don't wonder at it," chuckled Hopper. "It must be very unpleasant to have a man come to see you, and invade the sanctity—sanctity, yes, sanctity, that's the word—of your home and private office, who knows what a scoundrel you are."

"For Heaven's sake, speak lower!" cried Max, in a hoarse whisper.

"All right," said Hopper, nodding. "Especially to a man like you, who goes in for the religious dodge, and is so looked up to and respected by every one. Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho!" he chuckled—"what a wonderful deal is done in this world, Max, by humbug."

Max began to wipe his wet face with his handkerchief, glaring the while helplessly at his tormentor.

"You're such a good man, too, now," said Hopper, laughing, and evidently enjoying the other's discomfiture. "I saw you coming from service last Sunday, with the wife, and that dear youth in the next room, Fred, all carrying limp hymn-books. Ha! ha! ha! I say, Max, your prayers must be precious limp."

"Say what you have to say, and then go, for Heaven's sake!" gasped Max.

"Hey! say what I have to say? How I can read your fat lips, Max. I never feel my deafness when you are speaking. Well, I am saying what I have to say. I don't often speak out like this."

"Only when you want money," muttered Max.

"Only when I want money? Right. There, I told you I could read off your lips

every word you say, so don't begin to curse me, and wish I was dead, because it will only make me want more. Think it, if you like. I say, you must look sharp after that boy Fred, or he'll go to the bad."

Max frowned.

"If he was half such a lad as Tom!"

"Tom's a scoundrel—a vagabond!" exclaimed Max, furiously.

"Yes, yes, of course. To be sure he is. Every one is who don't do as you wish, Max Shingle. I'm a horrible old scoundrel, and yet you're obliged to put up with me. You can't afford to offend me, and I come to your house as often as I like; and I shall keep on doing so, because it's good for you. I'm like a conscience to you, and a devilish ugly old conscience, eh?—a deaf conscience—and I keep you from being a bigger scoundrel than you are. I say, Max, you'd give a thousand pounds down, now, to hear I was dead, wouldn't you?"

"What is the good of talking like this?" said Max, leaning over to whisper to his visitor.

"Hey? What's the good? A deal—does you good. I say, Max, I've often thought that you might be tempted to get me killed—by accident, of course. It is tempting, I know. You'd feel as if the old slate with the nasty writing on was wiped clean with a sponge. But it would be so ugly for such a good man to be exposed to such a temptation; and, uglier still, to add the crime of side-blow murder to his other sins. So do you know what I've done to save you from temptation?"

There was a curious malignity of expression in the old man's face as, with a chuckling laugh, he asked his question, and saw its effect.

"No! What?" exclaimed Max, in agony.

"Well, I've written it all down neatly on paper—not on a slate; and I've deposited it with my will."

"Where?"

"Ah, yes, that's another thing. Where it would be opened and read directly I was dead. Ha! ha! ha! Ah, ah, Max, what an *exposé* that would be. But don't be nervous, man, and look so white. It wouldn't be a hanging matter."

Max gasped, and wiped his face.

"Only a matter of twenty years—penal, you know. Forgery isn't—"

Max stretched across the table, and laid his hand upon his visitor's lips; but the old man thrust his chair back, and gave the hand a sharp rap with his stick, and Max shrank back in his chair.

"—isn't, I say, a hanging matter. But I say, Max, old fellow, I should look sharp after that boy Fred. Don't let him get into temptation. Like father, like son. Now, Tom—"

"Curse Tom!" cried Max, biting his nails.

"Not I," laughed the old man. "He isn't so bad—for your son—and you curse him quite often enough, you know. Ah, Max, what a blessing and relief it must be to you that you have reformed so, and become such a good, pious man!"

Max raised his hands.

"One of those dear, good creatures," chuckled the old fellow, "who go through life saying, 'Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,' and then feel so happy. Not a bit of the Pharisee about you, Max—all humble, Publican. I say, why don't you build a church or a chapel? That's the proper thing to do," he laughed. "Publican put me in mind of it. It's what the brewers and distillers do. Make fortunes out of the vice and misery of the people, and then buy a seat in the heavenly Parliament by building a church—"

"My dear Hopper," began Max.

"And endowing it."

"Will you listen to me, Hopper?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old fellow, who was thoroughly enjoying the other's misery; "they think they can cheat God with their sham repentance. Ha! ha! ha!—it's a rare joke, 'pon my word. Now, you know, Max, I'm just such a fool in my way, for I get thinking He'd have more respect for an honest old reprobate like me. But we shall see, Max, when we die—when we die; when you die, and the gravedigger puts you to bed with a shovel."

A spasm seemed to shoot across the other's face at these last words.

"I am an out-and-out bad one, you know, Max. I never go to church and take the Sacrament. I never go to chapel and hold

the plate. I never believed in the Excelsior game—to go up higher—because it's so cold. Ho! ho! ho!—I'm not a pure-minded man, Max, but would rather stay in the valley, and lay my head on the nice, pleasant, plump young woman's breast—so comfortable and cosy and warm. Eh, you dog, eh?"

He poked Max with his stick as he spoke, and then chuckled at the other's horrified air.

"I'm no cackle-spinner like you, Max. I never went through the world saying it was all vanity and vexation of spirit, and a vale of tears; and howled hymns, declaring that I was sick of it, and wanted to die and get out of it as soon as I could, because it was such a wicked, wretched place. I never told people I had a call, like you did; and played shepherd in a white choker, and went and delivered addresses to the lost lambs outside the fold. Ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!—because I was always a wolf, and liked the world, and thought it very beautiful, and loved it; and when I caught a lost lamb I took him and eat him right off, because it was my nature. Not like you, my gentle shepherd, who, of course without any vanity or self-interest, but all for love of Christ—that's the correct term, isn't it, Max? all for love of Christ—coaxed the lambs into the fold; and when you killed one, you had him nicely dressed with mint sauce. Eh, Max? mint sauce—the tap out of the barrels that they take into the bank."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed Max, at last.

"Mad as a hatter," said the old fellow, grinning; "that's why I chose the wrong way. Not like you. Ah, Max, when we both die, what a beautiful plump cherub you'll make up above there, and what an ugly old sinner I shall be down below. How sorry you'll be for me, won't you?"

"Pray, let us bring this interview to an end," gasped Max.

"No hurry," said Hopper. "I told you I was bilious when you were spinning that bunch of seals of yours. This is all bile. I'm getting rid of it. I shall be better afterwards. I have not had a go at you for a twelvemonth. I haven't half done yet. I'm not a pithy man like you—more pith than heart—but long-winded. Ah, I'm a wicked

old wretch, aint I? And always turned a deaf ear to what was good."

"But I am busy," pleaded Max.

"So am I," said the old boy, chuckling, and giving a box on the table a poke with the stick—"busy giving you a taste of my bile. What have you got there, my pious old saint? 'Donations for the debt fund of St. Ursula's Church.' Ah, that's a pretty respectable way of doing things, that is. Church in debt. Built up, I'll be bound, with fal-lals, and fancy work, and stained glass, and a quire inside—twenty-four sheets to wrap up singing men and boys. Now, look here, Max, if I built a place and hadn't money to pay for it, you'd call me a rogue or a fool—a great fool if I trusted to the money coming in by-and-by; but you religious fogies have no more respect for God than to go and build Him a house in that shabby way, and then stick cadging boxes about, and get fancy preachers and make collections to wipe out the debt. Yah! last time I went to church there was a great gun to preach, and bills outside with his name on, and the collection afterwards; and I felt as if I had been to a show, and said I wouldn't go any more. Yah, I hate such ways."

"Shall we try and transact the bit of business you came about?" said Max, humbly.

"Presently," said Hopper, who was now wound up, and determined to go on. "Ah, Max, you don't know what a wicked old man I've grown," he continued, with a sly twinkle in his eye. "I never sing any blatant hymns to the same tunes year after year, and say the same words, till I feel afraid that God must be tired of hearing them. I never tell people, like you do, that I'm trying to save my own precious soul."

"Lost! lost!" said Max, almost inaudibly.

"Good job, too," said Hopper. "Let my soul take care of itself. I'd rather go to the wrong place, if heaven's going to be full of such people as I get told are sure to be saved. Selfish canters! Yes, I'm an unbeliever, I am. I don't believe in Bunyan and his Christian. Pretty sort of a fellow—just your style, Max—wants to save his

own precious valuable soul, and cuts off—leaves his poor wife and children to starve, or be lost in sin, while he takes care of number one. I'd rather be one of the wicked, who'd say, 'No, my dears, I'll see you all safe into Beulah first; and then if you can stretch out a helping hand, here I come. What do you think of that?'"

"We shall never agree upon such points," said Max, wearily.

"Of course not, till you convert me, Max. I'm a brand for the burning, Max. Why don't you try and save me? Teach me to sing some of those nice hymns you know by heart, 'Fain would I leave this weary world.' Bah! How many would fain? Who made it weary? Who filled the beautiful world full of diseases, and death, and wickedness? Humbugs, sir—humbugs. I'm an old worldling, and I was put here in the world, and the longer I live the more beautiful I find it; and I don't want to leave it, even to carry your secret with me, friend Max Shingle. I mean to live as long as I can, taking my share of the bad as bitter to make the good sweet; and when it's time to set sail for the other land, I mean to go without canting or howling, but like a man, and say thank God for it all. Amen! There's a wicked old reprobate for you, Max. Why don't you try to convert this old scoundrel, eh? Ah, I'm a bad one—a regular bad one—hopelessly lost; and now I've got rid of all my bile, and feel better, get out your cheque-book."

Max rose with a sigh, unlocked the iron safe in the corner, and took out a cheque-book, and laid it upon a table.

"I can very ill spare this, John Hopper," he said. "Five pounds are five pounds now."

"Always were, stupid!" said the old fellow. "Dear me, how much better I can hear to-day. Got rid of all that bile," he added, considering. "But don't you draw that for five pounds. Make it ten."

"Ten pounds!" gasped Max.

"Yes. Five extra for your conscience. You don't suppose your poor conscience is going to preach to you, as it has to-day, for nothing?"

"But—" commenced Max.

"Ten pounds, you goodly saint—you man after heaven's own heart—you halo-promised piece of piety and man of heavenly manna!" cried Hopper. "Make it ten pounds directly, oh, grey-bearded piece of benignity, or I shall want twenty in less than a minute."

Max Shingle hastily drew a cheque for ten pounds, blotted it, and passed it over; for he knew only too well that his visitor would keep his word, and that he should be obliged to obey.

"That'll do—for the present," said Hopper, grinning, as he folded the cheque, and placed it in his very gouty pocket-book, when he rose to go.

"Good-bye, God bless you, Max! What a good thing it is for me that I have a wealthy saint who can relieve my necessities! Thank you, my dearest and best friend. I sha'n't give you any acknowledgment, because I know you mean this for a gift. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Max, who could hardly contain his rage.

"Good-bye. And a word more from your conscience. Good advice, mind. Look after Master Fred. Don't let him go your way."

"You've got your money. Now, be silent!" cried Max, savagely.

"All right," said the old fellow; and he stumped out, making his stick thump the floor, and nodding at Fred as he passed through to the outer office, while Max, as soon as he was alone, tore at his hair and ground his teeth with rage, as he heaped a series of very unchristianlike curses upon his visitor's head.



CHAPTER VI.

THE FLY ON THE WALL.

WELL, mother, it might have been worse," said Richard, sitting down to the humble dinner about a week later. "Here, Jessie, pull my ears."

Jessie, who looked very pale and red-eyed, as if with weeping, went behind her father's chair, took hold of his ears playfully, and pulled them, while he drew one hand before his face.

"Will that do, dear?" she said, drawing his head back so that she could kiss his puzzled forehead.

"Beautiful, my darling! Nothing like it. Tightens the skin, and takes out all the wrinkles. Keeps you young-looking, and makes your wife fond of you. Don't it, mother?"

Mrs. Shingle sighed, but looked affectionately, as she placed a spoon in the potatoes.

"That's right," said Dick. "Smiles is human sunshine, and don't cost anything. You both look as bright again to-day. Hallo! old fellow," he continued, thrusting a spoon into some hash. "Now, it won't do, you know. You can't deceive me, in spite of your brown gravy. You're that half shoulder of mutton we had on Sunday."

"Yes, it is, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle.

"I knew it. Didn't he gape wide open as soon as I cut into him, and pretend that three people had been helped. Oh, I knew him again! Come, look bright, both of you; things might be worse. See how I'm trying to shine! Come on: the best side of the looking-glass, both of you. The glue and wood will do for old Max."

In spite of his endeavours, the dinner was a sorry repast, the only one who enjoyed it being the boy; and as soon as it was cleared away, Dick and the others resumed their work.

"Do you really mean to go, Dick?" said his wife, at last, after making three or four efforts to speak.

"Yes, certain!" he said; and he glanced at Jessie, who was just then looking at him, when both lowered their eyes directly.

"But how can we leave without paying?" Mrs. Shingle ventured to say at last.

"Sell the furniture," said Dick, bitterly. "There, it's no use, mother, I won't humble myself to him no more. I've as good as took a couple of rooms off St. John-street, and go we will—for many reasons," he added.

"But, Dick, dear."

"Hold your tongue, mother," he cried, sternly. "I'm going to turn over a new leaf. Other folks make money; I'm going to make some now—somehow. But I don't know how," he added to himself. "Now, you sir, get on—we've got to make a fortune yet," he continued, hammering away; while Jessie's sewing machine clicked musically, and her little, white-stockinged feet seemed to twinkle as they played up and down.

Mrs. Shingle looked very much in trouble, for every now and then she wiped a furtive tear from her eye.

"How much money did you bring from the warehouse this morning, my gal?" said Dick, suddenly, as he looked up from playing cat's-cradle over a boot.

Jessie gazed at him in a frightened manner, and then dropped her head lower over her machine, while her hands trembled so that she could hardly direct her work.

"I say, Jessie, my gal, how much did you draw this morning?"

"None, father," said Jessie, with a sob.

And then, covering her face with her hands, she burst into a passion of weeping.

"Why, Jess, my gal—Jess," said Dick, dropping stirrup leather and boot. "Here, you sir; here's a penny. Go down to Wilson's and get a pen'orth o' wax."

"But here is plenty, master," said the boy.

"Go down to Wilson's and get a pen'orth o' wax," said Dick, sternly.

"Hadn't I better go to Singley's, sir; it aint half so far?"

"Go and get a pen'orth o' wax at Wilson's," said Dick, angrily. And he saw the boy off the premises before he crossed to Jessie.

"Why, what's the matter, my pretty one?" he said, tenderly.

"Oh, father, dear, don't be cross with me," she sobbed. "I couldn't tell you before."

"Just as if your poor stoopid old goose of a father could be cross with you," he said, fondling her, and drawing her close to his heart. "At least," he added, "I could be cross, but not with anything you'd go and do. Now, then, what's the matter?"

"Oh, father, I can never go to the warehouse again."

"What?" said Dick; "not go—"

"No, father," she sobbed; "that man—"

She stopped short, and Dick, with his face working, patted her tenderly on the shoulder, and then rolled up his sleeves.

"It's only father, my precious; tell him all about it," he whispered.

As he spoke he made a sign to Mrs. Shingle to be silent.

"That man, father," she sobbed, hysterically—"several times lately—insulted me—dare not say anything—the money—you so poor, dear!"

"Jessie," cried Dick, in a choking voice, "My poor darling, if I'd known."

"Yes, father, dear, I know," she cried, placing her arm round his neck and kissing him tenderly; "but you wanted the money so badly, I would not speak."

"But it was wrong, my darling," he said, angrily; "but tell me—all."

"This morning—I went," she faltered, "and there was no one in the room, and he caught me in his arms—and kissed me," she sobbed, with her face like crimson. Then, indignantly, "I screamed out, and Tom—"

"Was Tom there?" cried Dick, reproachfully.

"Yes, father; I could not help his being there. We had never spoken since that dreadful day, when Uncle Max—"

"Yes," said Dick, hastily; "go on."

"But he has come and watched me every day, father, at a distance, and seen me go to and from the warehouse."

"Bless him!" muttered Dick.

"And when I shrieked out," continued Jessie, with a look of pride lighting up her face, "Tom rushed in; and, oh, father, it was very dreadful!"

"What was?" said Dick, hoarsely, for he was evidently suffering from suppressed passion.

"Tom!"

"Mr. Thomas Shingle, my gal?"

"Mr. Thomas beat him dreadfully," continued Jessie, "till he cried for mercy; and dear Tom—"

"Mr. Thomas, my gal," said Dick, correcting.

"Made him go down upon his knees and beg my pardon, and then he brought me away."

"God bless him!" said Dick, fervently.

"But it's Mr. Thomas Shingle, my dear, and he's nothing to you but a brave, true young fellow, who acted like a man. But, that it should come to this," he groaned, striding up and down the room. "This is being a poor man, and having to eat other people's bread. Oh, it's dreadful, dreadful! If she'd been rich Max's daughter, mother, no one would have dared to insult her; and as for this blackguard, I'll—"

He caught up the hammer, and had reached the door, when Jessie and her mother ran and clung to him, Mrs. Shingle locking the door till he promised to be content with the castigation the fellow had received.

"Mr. Tom would be sure to beat him well, father," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Well, that is one comfort," said Dick, cooling a little. "I should have nearly killed any blackguard who had touched you. Well, mother," he continued, striding up and down the room, "when things comes to the worst they mends; but it don't seem to be so with us any more than with shoes, unless some one mends 'em. I mean to mend ours somehow. 'Why don't you try?' every one says. Well, I do try."

Just then the boy came back, and making a sign to Jessie and his wife not to let him see their trouble, all tried to resume their work, but in a despairing, half-hearted manner, in the midst of which, in a doleful, choking voice, Dick began to sing over his

sewing, while the boy seemed to keep time with the hammer with which he was driving in nails—

"For we always are so jolly, oh—
So jolly, oh—so jolly, oh—so jolly—"

sang Dick; but he was soon done, and his voice trailed off into a dismal wail, as, unable to contain themselves, Jessie's face went down over her sewing machine, and Mrs. Shingle hid hers in her apron.

"My God! what can I do?" the poor fellow moaned, as, with a catching in his breath, he glanced at those most dear to him. "I hav'n't a shilling in the world, and the more I try—the more I try—"

He caught up a hammer savagely, and began to beat vigorously at the leather, forcing himself to sing again, as if he had not seen the trouble of his wife and child—

"To get his fill, the poor boy did stoop,
And, awful to state, he was biled in the soup."

"Oh, master, please, master, don't sing that dreadful song," cried Union Jack, with a dismal howl. "I can't bear it; please, master, I can't bear it, indeed."

"Hold your tongue, you young ruffian," cried Dick, with a pitiful attempt at being comic. "It's a good job we've got you in stock; for if things do come to the worst, you'll make a meal for many a day to come."

"Oh, please, don't talk like that, master," cried the boy.

"Dick, dear," whispered his wife, "don't tease the poor boy—he half believes you."

"I'm not teasing of him, mother," said Dick, aloud; "only it's a pity to have to boil him all at once, instead of by degrees. Here, get out the cold tea, mother, and let's take to drinking—have a miserable day, and enjoy ourselves. Jessie, my gal, you'll rust that machine raining on it like that. Come, mother, cheer up, it'll all come right in the end."

"I was not crying, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle—"not much."

"Yes, you were," he cried, with a rollicking air of gaiety. "I saw two drips go on your apron and one in that child's shoe. Come, cheer up."

There was a pause then, during which all tried hard to work; but the knowledge that

they were about to turn out of the little home, and that their prospects were so bitter, combined with sorrow for their child, made a sob or two burst from Mrs. Shingle's breast, while even the boy kept on sniffing, and to show his sympathy for Jessie, thrust into her hand a very sticky square of hard-bake.

"Here, I can't stand this," groaned Dick, at last, getting up and walking about the room. "I don't spend no money, mother; only a half ounce or two of tobacco for myself, and one now and then for poor old Hopper, who seems to be cutting us now that we are so down. You don't spend much, mother; and it's as true as Gospel about shoemakers' wives being the worst shod; while as for me, I haven't had a real new pair this ten years."

"Don't take on about it, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle, making a brave effort to smile. And she took and patted her husband's hand affectionately.

"I wouldn't care, mother, if things were better for you two, and I can't see as it's my extravagance as does it."

"Oh, no, no, Dick, dear."

"One half-pint of beer this month, and it is the beer as is the ruin of such as me," he said, with a comical look—"and one screw of tobacco this week, and the paper as was round it, for thickness, why, it was like leather."

"Don't, don't mind, Dick," whispered Mrs. Shingle. "We'll sell the things, and clear ourselves, and start free again."

"Please, master," cried the boy, after a prolonged sniff, "I'll try and not eat so much. And can't I do night work, please, to help you? for you—you—you—Oh, dear, dear!" he sobbed,—"you never beat me, master. And missus and Miss Jessie's so kind; and I am so happy here; and if you, please—please—please—"

He could say no more, but stood up sobbing, and wiping his eyes with a very dirty corner of his leather apron, while Dick gave a great gulp, turned away his head for a moment to hide the working of his countenance, before going over with a fierce look to where the boy stood; and ended by patting him on the shoulder, and turning sharply away.

"It's all right, mother," he cried, with a kind of gulp. "It's got to the worst pitch now, see if it aint. Don't make it rain indoors, mother," he added, in a remonstrating tone; "'specially when we've only one umbrella in the house, and it's broke. Here, Jessie, my gal, what's that song you sing about the rain?"

"There's sunshine after rain, father," said Jessie, looking up in so piteous a way that Dick had hard work to keep back a sob; but with another struggle to beat back his cares, he cried—

"To be sure. 'There's sunshine after rain, my boys; there's sunshine after rain,' " he sang, making up words, and a peculiar doleful tune of his own, as he set to again and hammered vigorously at a piece of leather. "Work away, Union Jack, and sing, you dog—'There's sunshine af—aft—after—"

The hammer fell at his feet, and he rose once more.

"Go away, Jack, my boy," he said in a different tone of voice.

"No, no, master, don't send me back," cried the boy, passionately. "I'm very sorry. Please, master," he cried, throwing himself on his knees, and clinging to Dick, "I'll never eat so much again; and I'll try so—so very hard not to be hungry."

"Hush, my boy, hush!" said Dick, softly.

"And when I am, master, I'll never—never say I am. Don't send me away."

"Tell him—tell him, mother," whispered Dick, who had been so near breaking down before that the boy's passionate appeal completely unmanned him.

"There's nobody to care for there, master, and it's all whitewash. Miss Jessie, please ask him not to send me away."

"Come here, Jack," said Mrs. Shingle.

"No, no, missus; I'll stop here on bread and water—I will, missus. You've been so good to me; and I never had no father and no mother. Please—please let me stay!"

"I—I only want you to go outside for a bit, Jack," said Dick, with his lips quivering. "Go out and play, my boy."

"But," said the boy, suspiciously, "you won't cut off, master, and leave me. Fain larks, you know."

"No, no, no, my lad. Go and stop out in the court."

The boy looked keenly in his face, and then, with a suspicious look in his eyes, went outside.

"It seems to me as the poorer people is the fonder they get of you, mother," said Dick, pitifully. "Oh, my gal, what have we done that we should be so poor? Here have I worked early and late for the few pence we get together, and can't get on. It's because I'm a wretched bungler, and it would have been better if I'd never been born."

"Dick, dear Dick," whispered his wife, as he sat down despairingly, and leaned his head upon his hand, while she bent over him. "Don't give way. I can bear anything but that."

"I do try, my gal, harder than you think," he groaned; "and when I'm making most of a fool of myself, and laughing and singing, it's because I've got such a gnawing here."

He raised his hand to strike his chest, but it was caught by Jessie, who drew it round her neck as she knelt at his feet.

"And I've been so much trouble instead of a comfort, father, and it's all my fault," she sobbed.

"Your fault, my precious!" he cried, as he took her piteous face in his hand, and kissed it a dozen times over—"your fault! Why, you've been like sunshine in the place ever since you used to sit on your little stool there, and play with the bits of leather, and build houses with mother's cotton reels. Your fault, my darling! There—there—there! It's all over, mother, and the sun's coming out again. It won't rain any more to-day."

There was a pause here, and the little place was very silent as the cries of the children at play floated in.

"There, we'll have Jack in again; and, look here, it's cowardly and mean of me to give up like that; but it's the last time. So there, mother," he said, smiling, as she rose and stood between them, "as a respectable tradesman I object to swearing, as is only allowable when you want to take an oath. I'm going to take an oath now, when I says I'll be cussed if I give way again, and—"

"Here's a letter, master," cried the boy, rushing in.

"A letter," said Dick, taking it with his apron. "Who's been a-writing to me? Perhaps it's about that money, mother, and we shall— Here, my eyes are all of a swim. Did the postman give it to you, Jack?"

"Yes, master, at the door," said the boy, eagerly.

Mrs. Shingle took the letter, and opened it, to find a clean, new ten-pound note inside, which she spread out and held to her husband.

Dick took it, turned it upside down, over, round and round, and held it up to the light.

"It's—it's a duffer, mother," he said at last, with his voice trembling; "it's a flash note, look—like they are at the races. Bank of Elegance."

"For the Governor and Company of the Bank of England," read Jessie, slowly.

"No! Does it say so?" cried Dick, excitedly. "Then it's a good one, and it's a mistake. It isn't for me. Give me the envelope."

He took it hastily, and read aloud, "Mr. Richard Shingle, Shoemaker, Crowder's-buildings, Lower-street, Islington."

"That's me, mother," he said, looking from wife to daughter, "aint it?"

"Yes, Dick, it is for you," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Let's look inside. What does it say in the letter?"

"Nothing! There, we've only the blank sheet of paper in which the note was wrapped. Yes, on one corner, the words—

"For you, Richard Shingle."

"Then, it's from that Tom Shingle," cried Dick, plucking up; "and I won't take it."

"No, father," cried Jessie, eagerly; and she trembled, too, as she took the paper. "It is not his writing; and he would have said *Mr. Richard Shingle*."

"So he would, my gal," said Dick, nodding. "Then it's from Max; and he's sorry he's been so hard on me—dear old Max! And he wants to be friends again. Blood is thicker than water, after all, mother; and I always said it was. There, I'm as pleased as if it was a hundred from any other man."

The happy tears stood in the poor fellow's eyes, as he looked from one to the other; but to read no sympathy in the countenance of wife and child.

"That's five times, you know, that money's come like that," said Dick, "and always when we've been in great trouble. It is from Max, mother; and his roughness is only the way he's got."

A faint flush of hope illumined Jessie's face as she tried to believe her father's words; but it died out directly.

"Why, mother," cried Dick, joyously, "we can clear all off, and have some money to go on with; and—but, I say, if Max sent this, he wouldn't like us to go."

"Max did not send it," said Mrs. Shingle, decidedly.

"Eh?" said Dick.

"I am sure of it," she said.

"Then you know who did?"

"If I knew who sent it, Dick," said the poor woman, laying her hand upon his arm, "you'd have known too."

"So I should, mother—so I should," he said, quietly, as he nodded his head. "Who could it be, then?"

"Some good, true friend, who don't want to be known," said Mrs. Shingle.

"It would be a bitter pill to swallow," said Dick, thoughtfully, "if it was done in charity—a gilded pill, mother, wrapped up in that bit of paper. Oh, mother, mother!" he cried, stamping up and down the room, "I'm only a poor, miserable fellow, but I've got my pride like better men. I don't like this beggarly dependence on other people—this taking money in charity. If I could only hit a bright—invent some new thing that all the world would buy!"

"Watts was an inventor, and made the steam engine," said the boy.

"Hang Watts!" cried Dick, impatiently. "Here, you be quiet, I don't want your union-school copy-books here."

"All right, master," said the boy, with a sniff.

Dick walked up and down the room in an excited way, with the bank-note in his left hand, while a bluebottle fly came in at the window, and buzzed round the room, now up, now down, its loud hum rising and falling, as, apparently taken off from his

previous thoughts, Richard Shingle followed it, and as it settled he twice made ineffectual efforts to catch it.

"Buzz—uzz—buzz! Um—um—um!" went the fly; while Jack stood with open mouth and an old slipper, ready to hit at the insect if it came his way; Mrs. Shingle and Jessie glancing at one another, and then following Dick in a troubled fashion with their eyes, as he still pursued the great bluebottle.

"You've a fine time of it, you have," he said, "you great, lazy wind-flitter!"

"Buzz—buzz!—um—um—um!" went the fly, round and round.

"Ah," said Dick, "some men hit bright ideas, and make fortunes, but I don't; and it seems—ah, I nearly had you that time—seems, mother, as if we go on as we are that we may toil on—well, he is a sharp one, but I'll have him yet—toil on till we get to the workhouse!"

"Oh, don't please, master, don't go there," cried the boy. "Now, master—quick, quick. He's settled on the edge of the last shelf."

"I see him," said Dick, going cautiously up, with hand ready to catch the fly.

But, before he reached it, away it went round and round the room again. "Buzz—uzz!—um—um—um!"

"There's nothing done without trying, mother," continued Dick, who was quite excited now over his chase. "Try again, try again till you succeed's the way. Now, you know, if I was to—was to— Ah, gone again; but I'll have you yet. You see, I might—"

"Now, master, there he is," whispered Jack; "you'll have it now."

"Yes," said Dick, "I shall get it now. You see, mother, shoemaking and cobbling's all very well, but it means starvation to us, though it's a thing in common demand. If I could invent—ah! I shall have you directly."

He went cautiously across the room.

"Invent a pair o' boots as won't never

wear out, master," whispered the boy. "Now look, master—there on the wall!"

The buzzing had ceased, and all was very still in the low, shabby room, as the bluebottle settled on the centre of a figure in the common wall-paper; and Dick went forward, on tiptoe, while, somehow drawn into a keen interest in the pursuit, they knew not why, Mrs. Shingle and Jessie still looked on.

Slowly and cautiously, as if determined to make up this time for his many failures, Richard Shingle advanced closer and closer, just as a ray of sunshine fell on the wall, making the fly, which was cleaning and brushing itself, stand out plainly before them all.

It was as if the capture of that fly had something to do with their future in life, and the activity that Dick threw into the pursuit was shared by all present.

"Would he catch it? Would he fail?"

That was the mental question asked as he was watched, while he made a scoop of his hand, drew just within the required distance, paused for a moment, and then—

There was a rapid dash of a hand across the sunlit patch, and Dick stood up, with outstretched arm and closed fist.

"Bizz—izz—izz," went the captured fly, within his closed hand, as Jack gave his knee a delighted slap.

"At last, at last," shouted Dick. "I've got it, mother, now. Do you hear, Jessie? I've got it."

"Got what?" they cried.

He paused for a moment or two, turned to them with a curious look upon his face, and then said—

"The fly on the wall."

"Jessie, my darling, he's mad," whispered Mrs. Shingle, running to him. "Oh, Dick, Dick!"

"No, mother," he cried, "I'm not mad; but I've made my fortune."

As he spoke he held his hand to the window, unclosed it, and the fly darted into the sunshine—free.



CHAPTER VII.

WHO WAS THAT?



OT your Australian money yet, Dick?" said Hopper the next day, when he dropped in as usual.

"No," said Dick; "but I've got this," and he flourished the ten-pound note before his old friend.

"Hey? Got that," said Hopper, putting on a pair of great tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles, and taking the note in his fingers. "Why, it's—it's a ten-pound note. It's a bad un."

"No," said Dick, triumphantly; "it's a good one. I asked our grocer."

"Hey? A good one! Come by it honestly, Dick?"

"Of course he did," cried Mrs. Shingle, indignantly.

"Ah! I don't know—I don't know," said the old fellow. "There's a deal of trickery in the world. If it's a good one, then, Dick, and you did come by it honestly, you'll lend me a few shillings, Dick, eh? Say ten."

"Hopper, old man," said Dick, "you shall have a pound if you like; and, look here, I've hit a bright idea at last."

"No—have you?" said Hopper, whose hearing seemed wonderfully good.

"Yes, old chap; and a fortune will come of it. And, look here—we've been best friends when it was hard times, there's an easy chair in the corner for you when it's soft times. None of your turning proud, you know."

"Hey? Turn proud? No; I sha'n't turn proud. You will. Won't he, Jessie?"

"No," said Jessie, speaking up loud. "Father will never alter—never."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Dick, with a peculiar smile, which he seemed to wipe off directly by passing his hand across his mouth. "Perhaps I may alter, you know, and a good deal too. But, look here, old Hopper, you stop to-day and we'll have a holiday—the first I've had for years."

"Hey? Holiday? What, go out?"

"No," said Dick, "stay at home. We'll have a bit of supper together, and drink the health of him as sent me that money—bless him. I can't work to-day. I'm ripening up something, and I can do it best over the old fiddle. We haven't had a scrape for weeks."

"Scrape? No," said the old fellow, "we haven't;" and, getting up, he toddled to the corner cupboard, from which he drew out a violoncello in its faded green baize bag, and, patting it affectionately, brought it out into the middle of the room. "Ha! ha! ha! Dick, I was going to take it away to-day," he said. "It's too valuable to be lost."

"Thought we were going to be sold up, eh, Hopper, old man?" said Dick, taking down a violin that hung by the eight-day clock.

"Hey?"

"Thought we were going to be sold up, eh? I should have taken care of your old bass," said Dick, with a nod and a smile. "It should not have come to harm, Hopper, anyhow. Now, missus, and you, Jessie, give us a nice cup of tea, with srimps and creases, and a nice bit of supper about eight. We'll have a happy day in the old house for the last one."

"Last one, Dick!" exclaimed Mrs. Shingle.

"Yes, mother, the last one. I shall move into better premises to-morrow."

"Dick, dear," cried Mrs. Shingle, imploringly—while Hopper seemed to be busying himself over the strings of the 'cello—"what does all this mean? What are you going to do?"

"Do!" said Dick, making his violin chirrup; "throw away wax-end and leather. They say, let the shoemaker stick to his last; but I've stuck to it too long. Mother, I'm going to make a fortune."

"But how, Dick—how?"

"Wait and see, mother."

"You'll tell me what you are going to do?" said Mrs. Shingle, half angrily.

"I sha'n't tell a soul," replied Dick, firmly;

and then, seeing the effect his words had upon his wife, he kissed her, tuned up his violin, and then began to turn over the leaves of some very old music with the bow. "Here's the note, mother; and don't spare expense as far as five shillings go. Get a drop of whiskey, too."

"Hey! whiskey? Who said whiskey?" exclaimed Hopper. "Going to have a drop of whiskey to-night, Dick?"

Dick nodded.

"That's good," said the old fellow, laughing, and nodding his head. "We'll drink success to the new venture, Dick."

"We will," said Dick. "Now, then, what's it to be, eh? Here we go, 'Life's a bumper!' That'll do, for it is; and many a bump and bruise it has given me."

Hopper's head went down over his 'cello, Dick's cheek on his violin; and the oddly assorted couple began to solemnly scrape away, sometimes melodiously, sometimes getting into terrible tangles over the score, consequent upon its being set for three voices or instruments, and Dick having to dodge up and down, from the treble to the tenor and back; while Hopper, with half-closed eyes, and his head moving to and fro like a snag on an American river, kept on sawing away, regardless of everything but the deep tones he evolved from the strings; while the boy Jack sat on a stool in the corner, with his mouth wide open, and his hands upon his knees, drinking in the harmony as if it were one of the finest concerted pieces under the sun.

From "Life's a Bumper" they went to "Vital Spark," and from "Vital Spark" to the "Hallelujah Chorus," and from the "Hallelujah Chorus" to "Forgive, blest Shade;" and then Dick tried a solo known as "The Cuckoo." But it was a failure; for though Dick managed the first note of the bird, the second would not come—all owing to want of practice, Dick said—so he gave way to Hopper, who, with knitted brows, played his solo, "*Adeste fideles*," with variations, the effect upon the boy being absolutely painful, causing him to thrust his legs up under the stool, and head down, with his arms crossed over his person. His face, too, was drawn; and had it not been for the variations, it seemed probable that

Union Jack would have had a choleraic attack, consequent upon nervous fear and susceptibility, produced in early life by too much whitewash and normal union treatment as a substitute for parental. The variations, however, saved him; though he had a painful relapse during the third variation, which was *largo*, and in A minor, his face during the performance being a study. However, he became convalescent during the *allegro finale*, and all ended happily.

Tea being declared ready, the musicians ceased their joyous toils for the time being, and feasted on watercress and shrimps; and though the "creases," as Dick called them, were a little yellow, and the shrimps dull in hue, and too crumbly and soft for crustaceans, the meal was a great success, and Hopper actually made a joke.

It is not worth chronicling, but it showed the height of joviality to which he had climbed, though it was nothing to that which he afterwards reached.

Like giants refreshed, Dick and he returned to their instruments, and worked away until supper, which was luxurious, consisting, as it did, of a highly-savoured rump-steak pudding, with so much pepper in it, in fact, that both Dick and Hopper took off their coats, and perspired in peace.

"Ha!" said Hopper, suddenly—"I like this; it's better than eating curry in company at your brother's, where you can't scratch your head."

"Yes, nice pudding," said Dick, with his mouth full. "You've put a good lot of salt in it, Jessie."

"Lot!" chuckled Hopper. "I had one bit that tasted as if Jessie had put in Lot's wife as well—the whole pillar. But, never mind, Jessie; that's the best pudding I ever ate in my life. I could taste your fingers in the crust."

"There's a wicked old cannibal," said Dick, laughing.

"Hey?"

"I say you're a wicked old cannibal!" said Dick.

"Don't shout so; I can hear you," cried Hopper, huffily. "But, as I was saying—gravy."



"YOU'LL SHAKE HANDS WITH ME, UNCLE."—(Page 27.)

"You didn't say anything about gravy," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Hey? Not say anything? Well, I was going to; only you and Dick are so rich and proud, you won't let me speak," he chuckled. "Now, as to gravy. There's a baker round the corner has a notice up in his window—'Gravy sold here,' and 'Dripping' on another card. Now, where does he get 'em from?"

"Out of the Sunday bakings," said Dick, laughing. "That man's a genius, and his wife wears silk dresses, I know. I respect him."

"Then more shame for you, Dick," said Mrs. Shingle, sharply. "It isn't honest. You wouldn't catch me wearing silk dresses splashed with other people's dripping."

"And shot with gravy," said Hopper, chuckling. "No, 'tain't honest, Mrs. Shingle; and don't you let Dick get trying any of those sort of games, or he'll come to a bad end, like the naughty boy in the story book."

Dick vouchsafed no reply, only looked up at the ceiling and winked; while, the table being cleared, half a bottle of whiskey and the pipes were placed, with hot water, on the table by Jessie, whose eyes were always wandering nervously towards the door, as if expecting to see some one come in.

Hopper was the first to help himself to whiskey, which he did liberally, apparently not being able to judge the quantity on account of the foreshortening effect of the tumbler.

"That boy Fred been here lately?" said Hopper, taking his pipe from his mouth, and poking at the lump of sugar in his glass with a spoon, as if he were offended with it, or looked upon it as Fred's head.

"Not for some days," said Dick, puffing out a cloud of smoke, while he glanced at Jessie, whose forehead contracted, and she turned slightly away.

"Don't have him here; he's a bad one," said Hopper. "I don't like him. Look at his moustaches."

"Aint here," said Dick, jocosely.

"Hey? Aint here? Who said he was? Just look at his moustaches, stretching straight out on both sides, and worked into a point with wax."

"Well, they aint pretty," said Dick, "certainly."

"Pretty? Did you say pretty?"

Dick nodded.

"Look as if they were fixed there as handles to open his mouth with, or to steer him. I don't like that boy. You, Jessie, if you let that chap make love to you—Heyday, what's the matter now?"

The matter was that Jessie had darted an indignant look at him, and gone upstairs to her bed-room.

"Look at that, now," said Hopper.

"Well, you shouldn't speak to her like that," said Mrs. Shingle, indignantly.

"Oh, if it's coming to that, I'm off," said Hopper. "This is getting on in the world." And, laying down his pipe, he prepared to go.

"No, no, no—what nonsense!" cried Dick and his wife. And together they forced the old fellow back into his chair, where, becoming somewhat mollified after another glass of whiskey and water, he began to talk.

"She oughtn't to have huffed off like that," he said. "But I like Jessie; she's a sensible girl, and wear: her own hair, and doesn't turn her boot-heels into stilts and walk like a hen going to peck the ground with her beak; though how she expects to get on in the world without being more fashionable, I don't know. Ah, it's a strange world, and it's a great nuisance that we shall all have to die some day. Max won't mind it a bit," he chuckled, "he's such a good man."

"You leave Max alone," said Dick, gruffly.

"Hey, what say?"

"I say you leave Max alone. He's my brother; and blood is thicker than water after all—aint it, mother?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle, with a sigh.

"Simple girl, Jessie," said Hopper, musing; "you haven't dosed her with brimstone."

"And treacle?" said Mrs. Shingle, innocently—"no, never."

"Ho! ho! ho!" chuckled Hopper. "No, no; I meant mental brimstone, old lady. But there, never mind."

"How strange you do talk!" said Mrs. Shingle.

"Yes, I do sometimes," chuckled the old fellow; "but Max is a fine fellow."

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle, with a sigh, "he has his good points."

"Sharp ones, too," said Hopper. "Nice woman, too, Mrs. Max—not at all vulgar," he continued, with his eyes twinkling.

"Such a capital dresser, too," said Mrs. Shingle, with a woman's admiration of finery, in which her sister-in-law excelled.

"Capital!" said Hopper—"fine dresser. First-rate piece of furniture for a kitchen."

"Dear, dear! how that wicker chair crackles to-night," said Mrs. Shingle, who did not take the allusion. "There's something going to happen, I'm sure."

"Change of weather," said Dick, emitting a cloud—"and home—and position," he added to himself.

"Hush!" said Hopper, suddenly removing his pipe, and making signs with the stem.

"What's the matter?" said Dick.

"There's some one outside, under the window," he said, in a whisper.

"Why, you can't hear," said Dick, in the same low voice.

"Can't hear? No; but I can feel some one there."

"It's the boy," said Dick.

"No; he's gone to bed this hour," said Mrs. Shingle, nervously.

"Let's go and see," whispered Hopper.

"Stop a moment," said Dick, frowning; and, getting up, he opened the door that led upstairs, when a low whispering was plainly heard from above.

Dick shut the door quickly, and turned to his wife.

"Mother," he said, huskily, "I wouldn't have believed this if I'd been told. Did you know of it?"

"No, Dick—no," she cried, agitatedly. "But pray, Dick, stop. What are you going to do?"

"Put an end to it!" he cried, fiercely. "My gal's going to be a lady; and do you think I'm going to let her be the talk of the town?"

"Don't do anything rash, Dick, old friend," said Hopper, laying his hand upon the other's arm.

"Rash!" cried Dick, bitterly. "I've been

waiting for prosperity to come all my life; but, curse it, give me poverty again, if riches are to come with this."

A complete change seemed to have come over the man, as he darted to the door and swung it open, just as there was the rush of rapid footsteps along the paved court, and he ran off in pursuit; while Mrs. Shingle and Hopper followed.

They met Dick at the entrance, coming back panting; and he motioned them back into the house, and closed the door.

"Mother," he panted, in a voice that trembled with grief and passion, "I've left it to you to train our girl while I earned—no, tried to earn—the bread, and it's been my pride through it all to hold up my head and point to our Jessie, and say to folks, 'Look at her—she's not like the rest as go to the warehouse for work.'"

"But, Dick—dear Dick, don't, pray don't, judge hastily," cried Mrs. Shingle.

"I don't," said Dick, hoarsely. "All I say is there were a man out there, and she was talking to him outer window. Is that right, Hopper? I say, is that right?"

The old man looked at him vacantly, and seemed not to hear.

"Curse him! whoever he was," said Dick, hoarsely; "he was ashamed to meet me. It was Tom Shingle, I'll swear; and he's not the man I thought him. Here," he cried, swinging open the door that led upstairs, "Jessie—Jessie, come down! Hopper, old man, you're like one of us—you needn't go."

The old man, with a sorrowful look upon his face, had already reached the door, where he stood, leaning upon his stick, as Jessie slowly descended, looking very pale, and glancing anxiously from one to the other.

Mrs. Shingle was crossing—mother-like—to her child's side; but Dick motioned her back.

"Stop there!" he said, hoarsely; and then, taking a step forward—"Jessie, you were talking to some one outer window just now?"

She did not answer for a moment, but gazed at him in a frightened way.

"I say you were talking to some one outer window?"

"Yes, father," she faltered.

"It was to Tom Shingle," he said, in a low, angry voice.

There was no answer.

"I say it was—to Tom Shingle."

"No, father, it was not," said Jessie, in a low, clear voice.

"Who was it, then?" cried Dick.

There was no answer.

"I say, who was it, then?" he cried again, in a voice that Jessie seemed never to have heard before.

"It was to his brother Fred, father," said Jessie, almost in a whisper.

Tom Shingle had stood at the entrance to the court, and been a witness of the interview.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER A LAPSE.

MAX SHINGLE lived in the unfashionable district of Pentonville, but he had a goodly house there, and well furnished, at the head of a square of little residences that some ingenious builder had erected to look like a plantation of young Wesleyan chapels, which were growing up ready for transplanting at such and such times as they were needed to supply a want.

Mrs. Max—a tall, bony, washed-out woman; with a false look about her hair, teeth, and figure; large ears, in each of which, fitting close to the lobe, was a large pearl, looking like a button, to hold it back against her head—was seated by the fire. For many months had passed, and it was a chill December day, with the wind roaring down the streets, and beating at door and window.

She was not alone, for on a stool, in a studied, graceful attitude, sat Max's ward, Violante—a rather good-looking girl in profile, but terribly disfigured, on looking her full in the face, by a weakness in one eye, the effect of which was that it never worked with its twin sister; but was always left behind. Thus, whereas her right eye turned sharply upon you, and looked you through and through, the left did not come up to its work until the right had about finished and gone off to do duty on something else. The consequence was that when talking to her you found you had her attention for a

few moments, and then, just as you seemed to have lost it, eye number two came up to the charge, and generally puzzled and confused a stranger to a terrible extent.

"Dear me! Hark at the wind!" said Mrs. Max; "and look at it. Give me my smelling bottle, Violante. I'm always giddy when the wind gets under the carpet like that."

The smelling bottle was duly sniffed, and then, changing her position so that her fair hair and white eyebrows and lashes were full in the light, Mrs. Max looked more than ever as if there had been too much soda used in the water ever since she was born; and she sighed, and took up her work, which was a large illuminated text on perforated cardboard.

In fact, Max Shingle's house shone in brightly-coloured cards and many-tinted silken pieces of tapestry, formed to improve the sinful mind. Moral aphorisms about honesty and contentment looked at you from over the hat-pegs in the hall; pious precepts peeped at you between the bannisters as you went upstairs, and furnished the drawing-room to the displacement of pictures. Many of them lost their point, from being illuminated to such an extent that the brilliancy and wondrous windings of the letters dazzled the eye, and carried the mind into a mental maze, as you tried to decipher what they meant; but there they were, and Mrs. Max and the ward spent their days in constantly adding to the number.

The hall mat, instead of "*Cave canem*," bore

the legend, "Friend, do not swear; it is a sinful habit," and always exasperated visitors; while, if you put your feet upon an ottoman, you withdrew them directly, feeling that you had been guilty of an irreverent act; for there would be a line worked in white beads, with a reference to "Rom. xii., 9," or "2 Cor. ii., 11." If you opened a book there was a marker within bidding you "flee," or "cease," or "turn," or "stand fast." If you dined there, and sat near the fire, a screen was hung on your chair, which was so covered with quotations that it made you feel as if you were turning your back on the Christian religion; while, look which way you would, you felt as if you were in the house of a good man.

Pictures there were, of course. There was a large engraving of Ruth and Boaz, to which Mrs. Max always drew your attention with—

"Would not you suppose that Mr. Shingle had sat for Boaz?"

And when you agreed that he might, Violante always joined in, directing one eye at you, and saying—

"People always think, too, that the Ruth is so like Mrs. Maximilian." When the other eye came slowly up to finish the first one's task, and seemed to say, "Now, then, what do you think of that?"

The place was well furnished, but, from the pictures to the carpets, everything was of a very ecclesiastical pattern; and when Max came in, with a white cravat, you felt that you were in the presence of a substantial rector, if he were not a canon, or a dean.

In a wicked fit, Dick had once dubbed his brother and sister-in-law "Sage and Onions"—the one from his solid, learned look; the other from her being always strangely scented, and her weakness for bursting into tears.

Upon the present occasion, she sat for a few minutes, and then, taking out her handkerchief, began to weep silently.

"Your guardian is always late for dinner, my dear; and everything will be spoilt. Where is Tom?"

"Gone hanging about after Miss Jessie, I suppose," said Violante, with one eye. "And Fred, as well," she added, with the other.

"It is a strange infatuation on the part of my two sons. Your dear guardian's Esau and Jacob," said Mrs. Max, wiping her eyes. "I wonder how it is that poor creature, Richard Shingle, makes his money."

"I don't know," said Violante. "They've set up a very handsome carriage," she said with one eye, "and a pair of grey horses," she said with the other.

"Dear me. It is a mystery," said Mrs. Max, still weeping. "Fifteen months ago Richard was our poor tenant; now he must be worth thousands. I hope he is honest."

"Perhaps we had better work him some texts," said Violante, maliciously. Then, raising her other eye, "They might do him good."

"I don't know," sighed Mrs. Max; "we never see them now they have grown so rich. It is very shocking."

Violante did not seem to see that it was shocking, for she only tossed her head.

"Has Tom been any more attentive to you lately, my dear?"

"No, not a bit," said the girl, spitefully, and one eye flashed at Mrs. Max; "nor Fred neither," she continued, bestowing a milder ray with the other.

"The infatuation will wear off," said Mrs. Max, wringing her hands, but seeming as if wringing her pocket-handkerchief, "and then one of them will come to his senses."

"I shall never marry Tom," said the girl, decidedly.

"Don't speak so, my child," said Mrs. Max. "You know your guardian has so arranged it; and he can withhold your money if you are disobedient."

"Yes," cried Violante, "money, money, money—always money. That's why I am kept for the pleasure of those two scapegraces, and mocked at by that saucy hussy of a Jessie. I wish I hadn't a penny."

"Hush, hush!" cried Mrs. Max, "here is your guardian."

As she spoke, she hastily wiped her eyes—pretty dry this time—and put away her handkerchief, for voices were heard below.

In fact, ten minutes before, Max Shingle had been rolling grandly along from the City, looking the full-blown perfection of a thick-lipped, self-inflated, sensual man, when a very feeble-looking old wretch, with

vice and misery branded into his face, but evidently in suffering and misery enough to have brought repentance for the past, stretched forth a lean and yellow claw with a box of vesuvians therein.

"Buy a box, master," he said, huskily. "I'm nearly starving."

Max turned upon him, half closed his eyes, and gazed down with a splendidly parochial expression of countenance.

"Only another form of begging, my good man," he said, benignantly. "I don't smoke."

"I do," said the old fellow, bitterly—"when I get a chance. Begging? Well, what am I to do?"

"There is the workhouse, my good friend. I contribute largely to the poor rates."

"What should I do in the workhouse?" said the man, angrily—"die in a fortnight. Do you hear? Must have my drop of drink now, and my tobacco. Will they let me have them in the workhouse?"

"No," said Max—"no, my friend, they would not."

"Then why do you talk to me of your workhouse?" said the man. "Give me a copper, or say you won't. Don't cant."

"No, my man, I shall give you no money," said Max. "If I did my duty I should give you in charge as a violent beggar. Go and work—as your betters do."

"Work—what!" said the man, with a scornful laugh, "give me into custody. Well, do. Not the first kind action you've done in your life. How can I work now? Who'd give me work?"

"You should have thought of that before," said Max, who rather enjoyed the opportunity of reading a lesson.

"Ay, like you did; and grown rich, and smash, perhaps," said the man; "but I was a fool, and a rogue, and come to the dogs. Perhaps you are like me, and may come to the dogs as well. Yes, go on—curse you!" he muttered; "and keep the copper you would have never missed."

Max was rolling on, when he started and turned round angrily, for he was caught by the arm with a sudden check.

"You scound—"

"Hey? What say?" cried a well-known voice; and he found that it was not the

beggar's hand that had seized him, but that old Hopper had hooked him with his great oak walking-stick. "How are you?" he continued. "Ah, what a good man you are, Max; while I'm such a sinner. Been talking to this poor fellow for his good, eh? Ah, I couldn't hear a word you said; but it was all pearls and diamonds, eh? You feel better, don't you, my man, eh?"

"Yah!" growled the beggar; but he stopped to gaze curiously at the pair before him.

"Stop a moment, Max; you forgot to give him a trifle as well. So good of you to take an interest in his condition. Such a great philanthropist, my friend."

The man grinned.

"Give me the five shillings for him, Max."

"What?" roared Max.

"The five shillings you meant to give to him; and I should like to say a few words to him for his good as well."

"Five shillings!" gasped Max.

"Hey? What? Not got five shillings? Well, two half-crowns will do," said Hopper, with a chuckle that showed his intense enjoyment of the other's discomfiture; while, evidently under the belief that something was to come of the encounter, the beggar stopped and looked on.

Max turned angrily upon his heel, but Hopper was too quick, and hooking him by the arm, once more he checked his progress.

"Don't be ashamed to do good," he said, laughing in Max's face, while he held out his hand, into which, muttering savagely the while, Max dropped five shillings. "That's right—that's right. Now, you sir," he continued to the beggar, "what do you mean by growing old and ugly, and weak and miserable? Aint you ashamed of being such a wretch?—always loafing about, crustily, too, instead of crummily, like we do. Aint you ashamed?"

The man looked at him curiously, as if hardly knowing whether he was in jest or in earnest.

"Why, you're seventy, if you're a day," said Hopper, sharply.

The man nodded.

"What do you mean by living to se-

venty and being poor? There, here are this good, pious man's five shillings. Be off with you, and don't do so any more. Come along, Max—I'll go home to dinner with you," he continued, taking his arm.

Max swore a very ugly oath to himself; but he was obliged to put up with the annoyance—a feeling modified, however, directly afterwards, by his curiosity being excited.

"I've just come from your brother Dick's," said Hopper, winking to himself.

Max was mollified directly, for reasons of his own; for, though over a year had passed, Dick had kept his own counsel so well that not a soul, even in his own family, knew of the secret of his success. Hopper was as ignorant as the rest; but he assumed a knowledge in Max's presence that he did not possess.

"Is—is he doing well?" said Max, in an indifferent tone.

"Hey?"

"I say is he doing well?" shouted Max.

"Wonderfully! Keeps his brougham, and a carriage besides, for his wife and daughter."

"Ah!" said Max. "Is he civil to you? No music now, I suppose?"

"Only three nights a week," said Hopper, winking to himself every time he spoke. "Fine princely fellow, Dick. Ah, here we are! Very glad—I'm hungry. He wanted me to stay, but I would not."

Max opened the front door with his latch key, and drew back for Hopper to enter, which that worthy did, and began to wipe his feet upon the mat, which said in scarlet letters, "Friend, do not swear," &c.

"Damn that mat!" exclaimed Hopper, loudly, as he caught one toe in the long pile, and nearly fell headlong, while Max gazed at him in perfect horror.

"Couldn't help it," said Hopper, apologetically. "Didn't swear, did I?"

"Indeed, sir, you did," exclaimed Max.

"Hey? What say?"

"You did, sir," shouted Max.

"Did what?"

"Swore—at the mat," cried Max, again.

"Hey?" said Hopper, who had grown wonderfully deaf since he had been in the hall.

"I say you swore at the mat," cried Max, again.

"I swore at the mat? Did I? Tut, tut, tut! How hard it is to break oneself of bad habits! Now, I'll be bound to say you never did such a thing as that, Max?"

Max shook his head.

"No, of course you would not. Ah, Max, I wish I was as good a man as you. Five shillings to a beggar in the street. Ha! ha! ha! It's wonderful how some men's minds are constituted."

Hopper took off an unpleasant-looking respirator that he had been wearing more or less—more when he was not speaking, less when he was; and when it was in its place it seemed to have the effect of sticking his grey moustache up into his nostrils, like a fierce *chevaux de frise* round his mouth, to keep people from kissing him. Then he put his hat on his hooked stick, and his great coat on a chair, so as not to confront the moral aphorisms that were waiting to catch his eye, and followed Max up into the drawing-room, where the ladies looked horror-stricken at the sight of the guest.

But there was no help for it; and Mrs. Max, at a sign from her lord, put on her most agreeable air, though Violante gave him, uncompromisingly, an ugly look with one eye, which seemed to pierce him, while she clinched the shaft with the other, Hopper replying with his lowest bow.

The brothers Tom and Fred came in directly after—Tom to offer his hand in a straightforward, manly way; while Fred gave a supercilious nod, and went up to his mother.

Hopper nodded, and as soon as the dinner was announced offered his arm to Mrs. Max, and they went down to the dining-room.



CHAPTER IX.

AFTER DINNER.

A WELL-ordered house had Max Shingle, and his dinners were well served; and since he was obliged to receive the visits of Hopper, he made a virtue of necessity, trying all the dinner-time to lay little traps for him to fall into about his brother Richard; but as Hopper saw Tom lean eagerly forward, and Fred turn sharply to listen to his answers, while a frown passed between the two brothers, he misunderstood every word said to him as the dinner went on.

"So Richard is doing uncommonly well, is he?" said Max.

"Hey? You're not doing uncommonly well? So I heard in the City. Some one told me your house was quite shaky."

"Who told you that?" exclaimed Fred, fiercely.

"Hey?"

"I say who told you that?" cried Fred, more loudly.

"I can't hear a word you say, young man," replied Hopper; "you must come round. This is a bad room of yours for sound, Maximilian—I'd have it altered."

There were several little encounters of this kind during the repast; for Hopper, as soon as he saw the object of his host, strove religiously to frustrate his efforts, and with such success that Max gave up in disgust, and tried another tack, after making up his mind to call on his brother and try to become reconciled. This he was the more eager for now that it was a fact that he had lost very heavily of late, and his house was tottering to its fall.

"Ah!" said Max, at last, as the dinner progressed slowly, "it's a pity, Hopper, that you have no money to invest."

"Hey? Money to invest? No, thank you. But don't talk shop, man. I wonder so good a creature thinks so much of money. But you keep a carriage."

"Oh, yes," said Max, smiling good-hu-

mouredly at his wife, as if to say, "You see, he will have his joke!"

"And horses?"

"Of course," said Max, smiling.

"There, don't put on that imbecile smile," cried Hopper. "There's only been one decent dish on the table yet, and I've got some of it now. You don't send your horses out to work with their nosebags on, so don't make me work when I've got mine on. I'm hard of hearing, but I'm fond of my digestion; so don't treat your guest worse than your horses."

"You always did have a joke, Hopper," said Max.

"Joke!—it's no joke," cried Hopper, pointing at a pie before him. "Look at that—there's a thing to eat! Look at the crust: just like the top of a brown skull, with all the sutures marked, ready to thrust a knife in, and open it—only it's apple-pie inside instead of brains."

Mrs. Max gave a horrified look at Violante.

At last the dessert was placed on the table, and in due time the ladies rose, Tom following them shortly, and Fred, with a sneering look at his brother, rising, and saying he should go and have a cigar.

"You don't smoke, I suppose, old Hopper?"

"Hey? Not smoke? Yes, I do; but I shall have a pipe."

Left alone, Hopper condescended to talk about Richard, and gave Max a full account of his handsomely furnished house, growing so confidential that, when he took his cup of coffee, he drew nearer and nearer, gesticulating as he described the rich Turkey carpets; and, of course by accident, upsetting the cup of coffee over Max's knee, apologizing, however, so warmly that Max vowed it was nothing, and sat patiently, and heard a highly-coloured account of his brother's prosperity.

"He must be very rich," said Max, at last, as he tapped the mahogany table with his fingers.

"Not saved much, I should say," replied Hopper; "but he's making money fast. But so are you."

"Um—no. I'm very heavily insured, though."

"Not in the Oldwives Friendly?" said Hopper, with a curious look, though he knew the fact well.

"Well—er—er—yes, I am," said Max.

"They'll go to smash," said Hopper, eagerly. "Haven't you heard the rumours?"

"Ye—es," faltered Max.

"The scoundrels! And you such a good man, too; who has saved up and toiled for his two sons. I tell you what I'd do," he said, earnestly.

"What?" cried Max, turning to him with the eagerness of one in peril.

"They must last another twelvemonth, and pay up liabilities till then."

"Yes, they must do that, I should say," said Max.

"Then die at once, and let your people draw the money!" cried Hopper, striking him in the breast, and gazing at him with the most serious of aspects. "So good and self-denying! You all over."

Max started back, with horror in his countenance, and glared at Hopper, whose countenance, however, never for a moment changed; and he hastily poured himself out a glass of port and tossed it off.

"Very hard upon you, Max. I wish I was rich, and could help you. For you have been hit hard, of course. Never mind, you've that violent girl's money in hand

—six thousand. Make one of your boys marry her, and that'll be all right."

"Shall we go up to the drawing-room?" said Max, rising.

"Hey? Go upstairs? No, not to-night, thank. Say good-bye to the ladies. I'll be off now," said Hopper. "Thanky for a bad dinner. More wine? No, I'm going to my lodging, for a quiet pipe and a glass of toddy before bed. Wretched weather, aint it, for so near Christmas? All right, I can get my coat on. Thanky, Max, thanky. I sha'n't die yet, you know; your secret's all right. Stop till I put on my respirator, so as to keep my lungs all right, for your sake. Now, my hat and stick. Thanky."

He buttoned his coat tightly, and looped the elastic of his respirator over his ears, and then stumbled to the door, gave the mat an ugly stab with his stick, nodded, did not shake hands, and went stumping down the street, talking to himself the while.

"I wonder whether that Tom is a trump at bottom?" he said. "I don't know yet, but there's a bit of a mystery over it all; and about Fred and that girl, Jessie. She's a puzzle, too. I wouldn't have thought it of her; but I never did understand women. And so old Max is hit hard. Ha! ha! ha! Well, it's the old saying, 'Money got over old What's-his-name's back's spent under his chest;' and I'm sure of it. I'd swear it. He's spent every penny of that violent girl's fortune, as sure as my name's Hopper, which it really is."

CHAPTER X.

RICHARD AT HOME.

RICHARD SHINGLE was seated in his study—his own special room, tabooed, as he said, to every one but the specials—the specials being those whom he admitted. The place had a gay bachelor look about it, with a smoking-cap putting out a fiery Amazon, and the green shade of a gas

globe perched on one side, giving it a rakish air, as if it had been out all night. Cigars were in a box on the table, a handsome soda-water and spirit stand was on a side-board, and newspapers were lying about.

The furniture of the room was handsome, and in excellent taste; but it seemed as if finishing touches had been put by the owner himself, the said touches not being in keeping with the rest of the arrangements. There

was an absence of books, too, in the place, which certainly had not a studious air. There were, however, plenty of newspapers and reviews; and it was observable that while the *Saturday* and *Spectator* were in an uncut state, *Reynolds's* and *Lloyd's* were thumbed and crumpled with much reading.

Richard himself was in the room, lolling back in a comfortable easy-chair, in a rather loud-patterned shawl dressing-gown; one leg was thrown negligently over the chair-arm, a good cigar was in his lips, and as he smoked he diligently read the *Times*.

There was an appearance about Richard Shingle of having been dressed and had his hair brushed by somebody else, with the result that he was not quite comfortable; and every now and then he looked at the stubby fingers of his right hand, and had a bite at the hard skin at the sides, as if to help them to grow soft and genteel; for though as clean as if he had boiled them every day, to get them rid of old wax and leather stains, they looked as thorough a pair of workman's hands as it was possible to encounter in friendly grasp, or clenched in warfare unpleasantly near your nose.

"Phew! this is hard work," said Dick, pulling out a crimson silk handkerchief and wiping his forehead.

Then, laying down the paper, he rose, crossed the room, and poured himself out a little brandy from a decanter, before taking up a bottle of soda water and unwiring the cork.

Squish! fizz! pop!

There was a sharp explosion, the cork struck a gas globe with a loud ring, and before Dick could pour out the contents of the bottle, half of it was on the Turkey carpet, drenching his hands and the front of his dressing-gown.

"If it was only genteel to swear," he cried, "I'd have such a good one. Yah, it's as gassy as brother Max. Here's a pretty mess! Ah! that's better, though," he continued, as he poured out and drank the refreshing draught before returning to his seat, wiping his hands upon his crimson silk handkerchief. "It's very good sort of stuff, brandy and soda, specially the brandy; but I don't know that I like it so well as half a pint of beer just drawn up cool out of

a cellar, with plenty of head. Ah, those were days, after all," he said, sorrowfully. "One can't go and have half-pints now. Hold hard, my lad! Taboo! taboo! That's all taboo, you know.

"Well, I was always grumbling then, and wanting to be well off; but, somehow, we was very happy," he continued, reseating himself in his chair. "Now I am well off, I'm always feeling as if I wanted something else. But I don't know, if Jessie would only look all right again, and matters be square, I don't think I should grumble much. Well, here goes once more."

He gave the paper a fierce shake, got his leg well over the arm of the chair, and went on reading aloud.

"The Chancellor of the Ex-exchequer ap-peal-ed to the 'Ouse to give doo consid-e-ra-tion to the wote—vote—and said—plead—' Blow the paper, it's awfully dry work going through all this 'Ouse of Commons business every morning. Not half so interesting as the little bits about the accidents and murders and 'saults down at the bottom of the weekly papers. One never knows where one is, and the way I gets the two sides of the 'Ouse mixed up together makes me thankful I aint in Parlymint, or I should be doing some mischief. I wish Jessie would come. The members don't seem to talk quite so much stuff when she reads. Poor lass! I'd give a thousand pounds down—and I could give it, too," he added, with a fierce slap on his knees—"to see her looking as well and happy as she used."

He stopped, thinking for a few minutes.

"No," he said, aloud, "I haven't done wrong. I've said it a dozen times, and I says it again. 'No, my lass, I ask no questions about it,' I says; 'but that was an unpleasant piece of business about Fred Shingle, as is a reg'lar scamp, and if you loved Tom you didn't do right. You says he came and threw up something at the window, and you opened it, thinking it was Tom. Well, my gal, you didn't do right, then, after what had happened; but there, it's all over now—they belong to another set, unless they find out as we're well off now, and Max wants to be friends.' Ha! ha! ha! I shouldn't wonder if he did

some day. Ah, well, let's have some more paper."

He went on reading for five minutes, and then threw the sheet down impatiently.

"If it wasn't for seeming so ignorant, I wouldn't read a blessed line of it," he cried. "Talk, talk, talk! Why, they might say it all in half an hour; only one seems so out of everything if one can't talk about politics. No one ever says a word about the interesting paragraphs. I'm getting very tired of it all, and if ever I go into Parlymint I shall try for a comfortable seat below the gangway, or a hammock in the cabin."

He pulled out a handsome self-winding gold watch, looked at it with a sigh, and turned it over in his hand.

"Yes, you're very pretty, and very valuable; but now I've had you six months I don't care tuppence about you, 'specially as I don't want to serve you as we used the old thirty-shilling silver vertical. 'Make it ten shillings, this time, Mr. Dobree—do, please,' I says, one night, 'and I've got tuppence in my pocket for the ticket.' 'No,' he says; 'seven shillings—the old price; take it or leave it,' he says. 'Take it,' I says. And so it went on till we lost it. Taboo—taboo!" he exclaimed, giving himself a slap on the mouth, and putting away his timekeeper. "But I often wonder what's become of the old watch. Ha! ha! ha! it was a rum one. You never knowed what it meant to do. One week it was all gain, and another all lose; and the way in which it would shake hands with itself, as if it enjoyed having such a lark, was fine, only it forgot to leave go, and the two hands went round together. Ah, well!—the cases was worth the seven shillings; so Uncle D. didn't lose by the last transaction. But—taboo!—taboo! Here's some one coming!"

The door opened, and Mrs. Shingle entered, looking plump and well; and, having been very tastefully dressed by a good *modiste*, she was a fair example of what money will do.

It must be certainly owned that if she were to be calculated by the standard of refinement, it would have been necessary for her to hold her peace, as at the first words a considerable amount would have had to be taken from her value; but, all the same,

there was very little trace left of the homely shoemaker's wife of Crowder's-buildings.

"Well, mother," said Dick, smiling, as she entered, "what's the best news?"

"Bad," said Mrs. Shingle, wearily.

"Isn't Jessie any better, mother?" he exclaimed, anxiously.

Mrs. Shingle shook her head.

"What does she say, mother?"

"Nothing," cried Mrs. Shingle, sharply—"she's like her father, has her secrets, and keeps them."

"Don't—don't, mother—don't go on like that!" cried Dick, imploringly. "I've only got one secret from you."

"One, indeed," said Mrs. Shingle, growing red in the face, and certainly less lady-like in appearance; "but it's such a big one that it's greater than all the things you've told me all your life."

"Well, it is a big one, certainly," said Dick, caressing his chin, and smiling blandly. "It's been the making of us."

"And you keep it from your own wife, who's been married to you over twenty years."

"Over twenty years!" said Dick, smiling at her—"is it, now? Well, I suppose it is. But lor, who'd have thought it? Why, mother, you grow younger and handsomer every day."

"Do I?" said Mrs. Shingle, evidently feeling flattered, but angry all the same. "If I do, father, it's not from ease of mind."

"Come, come, mother," he said, getting up and putting his arm round her, "don't turn cross about it. I made a sort of promise like, to myself, when I thought of the idea that I've worked out into this house and this style of grounds for you, and your watch and chain and joolery, that I'd keep it all a secret."

"Then it isn't honest, father," cried Mrs. Shingle.

"That's what you've often said, mother, when you've been a bit waxy with me, and that's what I felt you might say when I first thought it out and promised to keep it a secret."

"Who did you promise?" said Mrs. Shingle.

"Him," said Dick, taking up an envelope, and pointing to it with pride. "See—'Richard

Shingle, Esq., The Ivy House, Haverstock Hill," he went on, reading the address. "That's the man I promised."

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle, trying to escape from his arm, but very feebly; "and kept it from your own wife."

"Well, yes," said Dick, with the puzzled look very strong in his face. "I have kept it from you; but it's a sort of religious oath—like freemasonry."

"Like free stuffery!" cried Mrs. Shingle. "When we were poor you never had any secrets from me."

"No, my dear," said Dick, kissing her—"never had one worth keeping; and see how badly it worked—how poor we were! Now I have got a secret for you—see how it works, and how well off we are!"

"I'd rather be poor again, then," cried Mrs. Shingle.

"Well, they was happy times," said Dick; "but there was a very rough wrong side. It was like wearing a good pair of boots with the nails sticking up inside"—slap! "taboo! taboo!" continued Dick, giving himself a blow on the lips.

"If I've asked you to tell me that secret night and day—I say, if I've asked you once," cried Mrs. Shingle, excitedly, "I've asked you—"

"Two thousand times, at least," said Dick, interrupting her—"specially at night."

"Then I'll make a vow, too," cried Mrs. Shingle, throwing herself into a chair. "Never more—no, not even when I'm lying on my dying bed, will I ask you again."

She leaned back, and looked at him angrily, as if she expected that this fearful vow would bring him on his knees at her feet. And certainly Dick did come over to her; but it was with a look of relief on his countenance as he bent down and kissed her.

"Thanky, mother," he said—"thanky. You see, it's a very strange secret, and mightn't agree with you."

"It's agreed with you," she said, tartly.

"Well, yes, pretty well," he said, smiling complacently; "but there, I've never told a soul—not even old Hopper; and fine and wild he's been sometimes about it."

"I should think not, indeed!" cried Mrs. Shingle.

"There, there, don't look like that,

mother," cried Dick, "you have got such a sweet, comfortable sort of face when it's not cross; and—there—it's all right, isn't it?"

It seemed to be, for Mrs. Shingle smiled once more, and Dick drew a chair close to her.

"Now, look here, mother," he said; "I want to talk to you about Jessie."

Mrs. Shingle sighed, and laid her head upon his shoulder.

"Poor Jessie!" she said.

"Now, what's to be done about—"

"I'm sure I don't know," sighed Mrs. Shingle.

"Do you think she cares about Tom now? because, if she does, I'll swallow all the old pride and hold out the 'and of good fellowship to him—that is, if he's a honest, true sorter fellow; if he aint, things had better stop as they are."

"But that's what I don't know," said Mrs. Shingle, with a tear in her voice—"she won't talk about it. You know as well as I do that it's all come on since that night at Crowder's-buildings."

"Taboo! taboo!" muttered Dick.

"That letter was the worst part of it."

"What, the one that come from Tom next day?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle; "it must have been very bitter and angry, for she turned red, and then white, and ended by crumpling it up and throwing it into the fire."

"And Tom's never tried to come nigh her since?" said Dick, musing.

"No," said Mrs. Shingle.

"Well, p'raps that's pride," said Dick. "He's waiting to be asked. I don't think the less of him for that."

"No," said Mrs. Shingle, "Jessie won't talk about it; but it's my belief that Tom must have seen Fred come to see her that night, and he told her so, and threw her off, and she's been fretting and wearing away ever since."

"Fred's often hanging about, though. Does she see him, do you think?"

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Shingle, "I don't think she does. Heigho! I don't know how it's to end. She's getting as thin as thin, and hardly eats a bit; and she's always watching and listening in a weary, wretched way, that makes me wish she was married."

"Well, that's it," cried Dick; "let's get her married."

"Are you in such a hurry to part with her, then, father?" said Mrs. Shingle, bitterly.

"Part with her? Not I!" cried Dick. "I'm not going to part with her. Oh, no. Whoever it is as has her will have to come and live here."

"Don't talk nonsense!" said practical Mrs. Shingle. "Nice thing, for a young couple to be always having their father and mother in the house! Suppose whoever it is should want to bring his too."

"Well, that would be awkward," said Dick, rubbing his nose. "Hush! here she comes."

Jessie came in just then, very gently, and her aspect justified Mrs. Shingle's words; for the poor girl looked thin and wasted, while a sad, weary smile played about her lips, as if she were in constant pain, and trying to hide it from those around.

"Why, Jessie, my gal," said Dick, "where have you been all this long time? Come along. I've got to leave soon—eleven twenty sharp," he continued, glancing at his watch, and shutting it with a loud snap; while Mrs. Shingle rose and left the room.

Jessie went to his side, and kissed him, staying leaning upon his shoulder; but soon after walked away to the window and looked out.

"That's what she's always doing," muttered Dick, biting his fingers, as if to get rid of a bit of wax—"always looking for some one as never comes. It must be about one of these two fellows. I'll try her. I can read her like a book. Jessie," he cried.

"Yes, father," she replied.

"I met Fred Shingle yesterday."

She started round, and looked at him with dilated eyes.

"And Tom Shingle, his brother, the day before."

Her face flushed, and an angry look darted from her eyes as he spoke, but she turned away; and her father's reading of the mobile face turned out to be a miserable failure.

"It must be Fred," he muttered. "I don't like it," he continued, biting his fingers, where an invisible bit of wax seemed to

stick tightly; "but I'm not going to see her die before my eyes. I'd sooner she married a scamp—if she loves him. But he don't have the playing with any money I may give her. Now, if Max would only make the first advances we might be friendly again. I can afford to be, and I will, but I don't like to make the first step. Jessie, my girl, if—I say if—if I was to become friends with your uncle again—"

"Friends with Uncle Max?" cried Jessie, starting.

"Yes, my dear. Blood's thicker than water, you know; isn't it?"

"Yes, father," cried Jessie, catching the curtains tightly.

"I've been thinking of it, you know, and I was going to say he did give you—us, I mean—the rough side of his tongue once."

"That's—that's all forgotten now, father," faltered Jessie, softly.

"You forgive him, my gal, for what he said to you?"

"Yes, father, yes," she cried, with a sob.

"And you wouldn't mind meeting him again?"

"N—no, father, I think not," she faltered.

"And you wouldn't mind meeting your cousin Fred, eh?"

"I—I don't think so, father; I would try not to mind."

"I wouldn't press you, my dear," he said; "but you know Uncle Max is my brother, and blood is thicker than water, eh? I say blood is thicker than water; and some day I must die, and I should like to be friends first."

"Die, father!" said Jessie, with a weary look. "Not you, father. Would it be very hard to die?"

"Here, I say Jessie, my pet, don't talk in that way. How should I know? I never tried," cried Dick, in a troubled way. "What makes you say that?"

"Because—because, father—"

She stopped short.

"Oh, there, my gal, no one's going to die yet; but I say, Jessie, your cousin Tom—you wouldn't mind meeting him, too?"

She turned upon him a look mingled of joy and dread; and then, shaking her head—

"No, no, father," she exclaimed, closing

her eyes, and with the veins in her forehead standing out—"I could not bear to meet him."

"It's Fred! I said it was," exclaimed Dick to himself. "Well, I'm sorry; but it can't be helped. I'll talk to him like a father, and bring him round. Now, if—What do you want, John?"

He turned sharply round, for the door opened, and a page in a neat livery, hardly recognizable as the 'prentice of the shoe-maker's workshop, entered the room.

"Please, sir, here's a gentleman to see you."

"Who is it?" cried Dick; "and what are you grinning at?"

"Please, sir, it's Mr. Maximilian Shingle; and 'ere's his card."

Max Shingle had made up his mind, without any allusion to blood being thicker than water, to make the first advance to his brother. For it was very evident that Dick had hit upon some means of making money very rapidly, whilst of late matters had been turning out very badly in his own business arrangements. No matter what he tried, or how he speculated, everything turned out wrong; until, in a kind of reckless gambling fit, to try and recoup himself for past losses, Max had plunged himself more deeply in the mire.

He had broached his intentions to his wife and ward at breakfast time, and Mrs. Max had shed tears.

"I'm sure I don't know what to say, Max," she whimpered, "unless it be—oh!"

She uttered a loud shriek.

"My poor darling, what is it?" cried Max. "Another of your little fits? There, go to her, Violante. She will be better soon."

"Yes, yes—it is nothing," faltered the poor woman. "I shall be better directly."

And she looked in a frightened way at her smooth, smiling lord, as she ground her teeth and pressed her lips together, to keep from moaning aloud.

Violante, who did not know what was the matter, jumped up and went to Mrs. Max's assistance; while the cat, who did know what was the matter, having felt Max Shingle's boot whisk by her ears as it struck poor Mrs. Max in the shin, crept out of harm's way, and curled up on the mat.

Tom Shingle and his brother Fred had risen and left the table, the one for Somerset House, the other for the office, before this incident occurred, or probably it would not have taken place; but Max had his reasons for not speaking sooner—one being that he fully intended Tom to marry his ward, and the other that he wished to pay his visit before his sons were aware of the fact.

On reaching his brother's house, it was with a feeling of annoyance that he was ushered by the boy into the handsome dining-room, opening upon a conservatory, where, amongst other pictures, that of Dick and his wife occupied conspicuous places.

"So you say your master is at home, my man," said Max, with his most urbane smile, as the boy came back from the study.

"Yes, sir, he don't go out till nearly mid-day on Toosdays. He says will you wait five minutes, sir."

"You didn't know me again," said Max, smiling in an ingratiating manner, as he drew out his card-case.

"Oh, don't I just know you again, sir!" cried the boy. "You're master's brother, as used to come to the old place."

"Quite right, my man, quite right," said Max, "I am your master's brother."

"You didn't know me again, sir?" said John.

"No, my man, no," said Max, putting up his glass, and gazing at the boy with great interest; "you have improved so wonderfully. Ah! you look better than you did in those old days."

"I should think I did, sir. Things is altered now. Master never talks about the shoemaking; he calls it taboo."

"Does he really?"

"Yes, sir, and things is altered. Never feel hollow now—nothing never gnaws inside; and master says it's all because my 'gestion's better. He knows."

"Stop a moment, my man," said Max, insinuatingly; "here's a shilling."

"Thanky, sir; shall I go now?"

"In a moment," said Max. "So he's in his study, is he? Making patent boots and shoes?"

"Bless your 'art, no, sir, he don't make no boots and shoes now. He buys all the

very best. Look at that," he continued, holding out a foot.

As he spoke, Dick made his appearance behind them at the conservatory door, when, on seeing Max talking to the boy, he drew back behind the plants.

"Ah, yes," said Max, "that's a handsome boot; and you've got a good foot, my lad."

"Them's the best boots in the trade, sir," said the boy, proudly.

"He's going to pump him," muttered Dick. "Well, if he plays those games, I shall do the artful too."

"So you never feel hungry and hollow now, my man?" said Max.

"I should think not, sir. Master gave orders that I was always to have as much as I liked to eat. And I do," he added, unctuously.

"He don't know much," muttered Dick; "but if he gets putting old Max on the scent, I'll half smother him."

"So you eat and drink as much as you like, do you, my man?" continued Max.

"Don't I?" said the boy, laughing. "I should just think I do. Why, I've grow'd out of two suits of livery since we've been here."

"And how long's that?"

"Twelve months, sir; and these is getting too tight."

"You were not in quite such a fine house as this before, were you?"

"Oh, no, sir, nothing like; but we've been doing very well lately."

"You young villain!" muttered Dick; "if you get telling tales I'll never forgive you."

"So I suppose," said Max. "And so you are very happy and comfortable?"

"It's lovely, sir."

"Master and mistress very kind, I suppose?"

"They jest are, sir. Missus and miss seems like two angels, sir."

"And your master—does he ever give you the stirrup leather now?" said Max, laughing.

"Give me the sterrup-leather!" said the boy, looking pugnacious; "no, he just don't. I should like to ketch him at it. Sterrup-leather! why, he treats me just like a son."

"But of course you are not his son?" said Max, with a smile.

"There's impudence," muttered Dick, from behind a great camellia. "Nice brotherly attack on me. Why, the young ruffian's going to say he is, just out of pride and vanity!"

"No, sir, I was a workusser."

"A what?"

"A workusser, and was sent out to one o' the whitewashy schools. That's where master got me. I'll go and see if master's ready; for, you know, sir, Miss Jessie was with him afore, and she's very poorly."

"Wait a moment, my lad," said Max; "there's another shilling, for being such a good boy and stopping at your place."

"Stop, sir!" said John, grinning, as he bit the edge of the coin, and then slipped it in his pocket—"I should think I do stop; master couldn't afford to part with me."

"If that boy tells all he knows, I'll half kill him," muttered Dick, who, playing the eavesdropper, stood a fair chance of suffering the listener's fate.

"I suppose not; you're so useful to him in his business, I suppose?"

"Pooty well, sir," said John, drily.

Max tried another tack:

"Master look well, John?"

"Lovely, sir!" cried the boy. "He's a regular swell now."

"Is he, though?"

"Tip-top, sir; never puts on a shirt twice, and wears three pairs o' boots every day—shiny leather ones."

"Does he, though?" said Max, drawing nearer to the boy. "And so he wouldn't like to part with you?"

"Oh no, sir. I goes to the City with him every day—in the broom sometimes."

"He keeps a brougham, then?" said Max.

"My master could keep anything he liked," said the boy, proudly; and Dick took a two-shilling piece out of his trousers pocket and placed it handy in his vest. "He's going to have a yatched."

"A what?" said Max.

"A little ship of his own, to go sailing about in."

"Then he must be very rich," said Max, insinuatingly.

"Rich?" said the boy. "I should think he is. Rolling in riches."

"And what did you say his business was, my lad?"

"Master's business is master's business, and nobody else's," said the boy, sharply. "Here he is, sir."

For just then Dick's cough was heard, and his step in the conservatory. And now, in the whitest of vests, and the glossiest of frock coats, he came into the room as the boy backed out.

"My dear Richard!" cried Max, with effusion, and the tears stood in his eyes as he stretched out his hands. "I am delighted to see you again."

"Are you?" said Dick, coolly, and without taking any notice of the outstretched hands.

"So glad, I cannot tell you," cried Max, taking out and unfolding a cambric handkerchief, which he held to one eye, looked at it after to see if there was a moist spot for result, and, as there was not, tried the other eye with rather better success. "You'll shake hands?"

"Oh, yes," said Dick. "How are you, Max?"

"Quite well, my dear brother; but why haven't you been to see me all these long months?"

"Long months, eh? Well, really," said Dick, "I never found 'em long. I began to think I was being took advantage of now that I was well off, and getting short measure."

"Then you are very well off?" said Richard.

"Tol-lol, tol-lol; nothing much to grumble about. But sit down."

He placed an easy-chair for his brother, seating himself afterwards on the edge of the table and watching him sharply.

"I'm very glad of it, Richard," cried Max, after a glance round. "You know, I always thought that a man with your brains was throwing himself away on trade, and wasting his energies."

"Ah, you did, did you?" said Dick.

"Always, my dear brother; and that's why I used to speak so sharply to you—to rouse you—to awaken you."

"Well, you did that, and no mistake!" said Dick, laughing.

"And look at the result. You set to and

hit upon some bright idea; and now, before two years have elapsed, I come and find you a millionaire."

"Well, not quite that, Max; millions is a stiff sum, Max—a very stiff sum."

"Hah! it's refreshing to come and hear you call me again by that familiar name, Richard: it reminds me of when we were boys." And he raised his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Well, Max," said Dick, "I wouldn't cry about it if I was you. It's all right now. You always was pretty well down upon me when I was a poor man; but as you've come and showed, as I said to Polly, that blood's thicker than water, why, we'll forget all about the past."

"We will," cried Max, taking his hand, and beginning to pump it up and down, clinging to it the while as if he were afraid of being parted, and ending by trying to embrace him.

"I say, don't do that!" cried Dick, sharply. "I'm pretty well off, but I can only afford one clean shirt a day."

"Jocular as ever," said Max, holding his head on one side, and looking at him admiringly. "Humour flourishes in a golden soil. And so, my dear Richard, you make your twenty per cent. out of your profession?"

"Twenty per cent.!" said Dick, contemptuously. "Why, you don't think this sort of thing's done on twenty per cent., do you?"

"How much, then?"

"Well," said Dick, "I'm not particular. I take a hundred per cent. when I can't get a hundred and fifty."

"A hundred and fifty per cent.!" My dear Richard, you must put me on to this. We must be partners, Dick. Shingle Brothers, eh? But, my dear boy, what business are you in?"

"Ah, yes—that's it!" said Dick, closing one eye slowly, and keeping it shut while he fixed the other on the ceiling. "But here are the ladies."

As he spoke, Mrs. Shingle and Jessie entered the room.

"Never!" exclaimed Max, with an air of wonderment. "My dear sister, my dear niece—years younger on the one side, years

more beautiful on the other. What a change since I saw you last!"

"There's better light in this room than in the old one, Max; and it flatters, perhaps," said Dick.

"Yes, so there is, Richard. That was a cruel cold place. But why speak of the past? My dear niece, you have really grown beautiful. Fred would be charmed to see you."

Jessie's eyes contracted as she gazed full at him, and then, bending her head slightly, she turned away.

"Haven't you married him to a lady of fortune yet?" said Dick.

"Oh, no," said Max, hastily. "He is not engaged. Tom is—to my ward, Violante—a charming girl."

Jessie stood as if turned to stone, but no

sound escaped her. Dick, however, saw that she was suffering, and he said, sharply—

"Ah, fine young fellow, Tom; but deuced low in his tastes. Wanted to marry a poor shoemaker's gal—girl, I mean. But there, come into my study, and I'll give you a glass of comic port. Mother, tell them to bring in the comic port."

"Comet port," she whispered. "I told you before."

"All right—only meant to get him away. Look at Jessie."

"I shall be delighted," said Max. "Ladies, good-bye for the present."

His bow was perfection; and then Dick led the way through the well-filled conservatory, and Mrs. Shingle caught her child's stony hand in her own, for she seemed about to faint.

CHAPTER XI.

A LUNATIC.

JESSIE, are you ill?" cried Mrs. Shingle, anxiously.

"No, mother, no," said Jessie, making a brave effort to recover herself. "It is all past now."

"It was them talking in that heartless manner about those two fellows," cried Mrs. Shingle, indignantly. "What is it, John?"

"Here's another gentleman to see you, mum," said the boy.

As he spoke, Mr. Fred Shingle, elaborately dressed, walked into the room, a pull at the bell sounding through the house as he made his salutations, and, in a light and airy way, began to converse on various topics, just as if they had been the greatest intimates all along.

"Mr. Thomas Shingle," said John, in a loud voice. And, in a hasty, excited manner, Max Shingle's elder son entered the room, to look angrily at his brother, as he saw him seated there.

"You here?" he cried, sharply.

"Ya-as, I'm here, Tom," was the cool reply.

"Aunt—Jessie!" exclaimed Tom, advancing. "I, by chance, heard that my father had entered your doors; and, taking this as an augury that we were to be friends once more, I followed him; but I did not expect to find my brother here, and that I should be—"

"*De trop*," said Fred, with an irritating smile; "but you do."

Tom turned upon him sharply, but, mastering his passion, he crossed to where Jessie was seated, and held out his hand.

"Jessie," he said, in a low, choking voice, "you will shake hands with me? I forgive all the past now, and wish you every happiness."

At his first words a glad light had leaped into the poor girl's eyes, and she half raised her hand to take his; but as he finished his sentence, and she felt how he misunderstood her, a stony rigidity stole over her, and she shrank back, letting her hand fall upon her lap.

It was too hard to bear, and she would have given worlds to have been able to rush from the room—anywhere, so as to be alone—and sob and wail aloud, to relieve



"A WHAT?"—(Page 54.)

her bursting heart. But it was impossible. She could not stir—only look up at Tom—as with knitted brows he stood there, evidently resenting her coldness.

Never once had her thoughts strayed from him; and yet he had misjudged her so cruelly, believing that she trifled with him, that she played with his heart, while she coquetted—behaved lightly—with his brother; and now, after these long, weary months—after what would soon be two years of misery—now that he had come, her heart had whispered, to tell her that he had been wrong, and misjudged her, while he asked her pardon for the past—a pardon that she would joy in according—she had to hear, first that he was engaged to another, and then read in his face that his doubts and misgivings were stronger than ever.

Poor Jessie's heart, that had been expanding fast, like the petals of a flower, to drink in the sunshine of hope, and love, and joy, seemed to contract and shrivel up, blighted and seared; and, cold and stony, she sat there, while, with a half-laugh of annoyance and contempt, Tom turned away.

"As you will, my fair cousin," he said, in a low, bitter voice. "I suppose I am to call you sister some day. How the world changes! Better poverty and truth than this."

He turned abruptly, and began speaking to Mrs. Shingle; while Fred, seizing the opportunity, took a seat beside Jessie on the couch, and began to talk to her rapidly about the various trifles of the day—chattering on, while she seemed to be listening to him, for she replied in monosyllables, though she was striving, with every nerve attent, to hear what was said by his brother.

Before many words had passed, though, voices were heard from without, increasing in loudness; and Mrs. Shingle started up, for it was very plain that Dick was in a towering rage.

In fact, as he came through the conservatory, he struck a handsome jardinière a heavy blow with his open hand, shivering it upon the tessellated tiles of the floor.

"Hallo, here!" cried Dick, angrily, as he entered, followed by Max, "you are all here, are you! Why didn't you bring the wife and the servants, and take possession? It's

all right—there's plenty of room. Here, you sir, get off that sofa!"

The young men rose as he entered—Fred very slowly, and evidently amused; while Tom's face flushed with rage.

"Oh, father!" cried Jessie, whose face had become suffused from shame and annoyance.

"There, I know what I'm doing," he said. "Hold your tongue. You and your mother had better be off. You'll stop? Well, then, stop."

"Is your husband subject to a little—er—er— You know, Mrs. Richard Shingle," said Max, tapping his forehead.

"No," said Dick, sharply, "he isn't. And now, may I ask, young fellows, how it is you condescend to be here?"

"They came unknown to me," said Max, hotly.

"I dessay they did," cried Dick; "but whether they did or not, they've come to the wrong place, and I forbid them, once for all, my house."

"Come, father," said Tom, sternly; while Fred took a step to Jessie's side, and whispered—

"Dear Jessie, for heaven's sake let this make no difference to us."

She turned her eyes upon him for a moment, and Tom saw the glance, and, as she gazed at him, directed a look upon her of withering contempt, beneath which she shivered.

"Don't be in too great a hurry," said Dick. "As you are here, we may as well have it out. We don't often meet. Now, Max, my most affectionate brother, have the goodness to say that again, and let your sons hear what sort of a man you are."

"No," said Max, "I leave now. I shall take my own steps about it."

"You will?" said Dick, looking startled.

"I shall, sir—I shall. I don't consider you are fit to be trusted. There are such cases as inquiries in lunacy."

"Bah!" said Dick, who looked startled all the same. "Well, if you don't say what you said to me, here out loud before them all, I shall say it myself."

"Then I will say it!" cried Max, desperately. "What I said, my sons, was this: As your uncle has hit upon some scheme

for making a fortune, I have a right, as his own brother—"

"Very own, indeed," said Dick, quietly.

"To share with him in the secret," continued Max.

"And what I say to it is," cried Dick—"and you can all hear me—that what I invented with my own brains is my own property, and I won't be bullied out of it by all the brothers in Christendom."

"Then I shall follow out my own course."

"Follow it, then," said Dick, scornfully, "and let your boys come after you."

Tom turned upon him resentfully, but merely ground his teeth; while Fred winked, and tapped his teeth with his cane.

"I have not been idle during my interview with my poor afflicted brother," continued Max; "and I have seen enough from his wild behaviour and language to know that the mental disease that has been threatening for years has now obtained such a hold that he is no longer fit to manage his own affairs."

"I say, hold hard there!" cried Dick, looking at him in a puzzled way.

"I shall, of course, make due arrangements for the proper carrying out of his business, and for protecting the interests of his wife and child."

"Father!" cried Tom, stepping forward, "this is atrocious; there are no grounds for what you say."

"Silence, sir!" roared Max; while Dick's countenance underwent a complete change.

"There!" cried Dick, angrily, as he appealed in turn to all present; "what did I always say? Max, you always were, and always will be, a 'umbug!'"

"What?" cried Max.

"A 'umbug, sir. U-m, um—b-u-double-g, bug, 'umbug! That for you," cried Dick, snapping his fingers in his brother's face.

"Ah!" said Max, with a heavy sigh; "all proof of what I say—the violence, the excitement, these strange outbursts. My poor brother!"

He took out his handkerchief, and applied it to his eyes.

Dick looked at him for a moment, then at his wife and child, and then his face grew longer, and his hand played nervously about his face.

"But, I say, Max," he cried, "you don't mean this. I'm as right in the upper storey as you are."

Max wiped his eyes, and shook his head.

"My dear Richard," he said, "I'd give my right hand to know you were. This is dreadful."

"Dreadful? It's worse than dreadful," cried Mrs. Shingle, catching her husband's arm. "Dick, make him leave the house."

"My dear Mrs. Shingle," said Max, deprecatingly, "this is folly. You only excite him terribly."

"Excite him?" cried Mrs. Shingle.

"Yes, my dear," said Dick, wiping the perspiration from his face, "it do excite me a deal. I don't know that Max aint right; but he won't be hard on me—Max won't. I have felt a little—little confused and upset, you know, about my business sometimes."

"Father, it is not true," cried Jessie, going to his side. "Your mind is perfectly clear."

"I'm afraid it aint, my dear," he said. "But your Uncle Max won't be hard on me. No sending to asylums or that sort of thing. Just a friendly visit from a doctor or two, and I should be soon put right."

"Whatever the cleverest medical man I could procure—a specialist on your particular ailment—said, I should go by," replied Max, sadly.

"There, mother—there, Jessie, what did I tell you?" cried Dick, brightening up. "Blood is thicker than water. I always said it was. Max will do what's right."

"With Heaven's help I will," said Max, solemnly; while, unable to contain his disgust, Tom walked to the window.

"Of course he will," cried Dick, who indulged in a kind of breakdown, ending with a stamp on the floor, as Mrs. Shingle and Jessie looked on in a horrified way. "And look here, Max, old man," he cried, panting with his exertions, "it'll be all made up now, and we shall be the best of friends, eh?"

"Yes, dear Richard—the best of friends," said Max, glancing at Mrs. Shingle, and then shrugging his shoulders and raising his eyes.

"But about my business," said Dick,

uneasily. And he began to bite the bits of tough skin at the sides of his fingers.

"Richard, are you mad?" cried Mrs. Shingle, excitedly. "You shall not talk about it. You have kept it secret so long, even from your own wife and child, and you shall not talk about it to him."

Dick smiled at her rather vacantly.

"Well, it do seem hard, mother, certainly; but it was sure to come out some day, and it's best for one's own brother to know of it—better than anybody else, because he'll do what's right and best for every one—you and Jessie too, of course; for if I get worse, as I may, you know, it would be sad, you know, for it all to go to ruin for want of a master mind, and no one left to take care of you—and—you come to ruin, and not even your poor husband to make boots and shoes for you again. Ha! ha! ha!"

He laughed hysterically, and Mrs. Shingle threw her arms round his neck.

"Oh, Dick! dear Dick! what has come to you?" she cried. Then, rousing herself, she turned angrily upon Max. "This is your doing," she cried. "He was quite well till you came."

Max shook his head sadly, and wiped his eyes, while Fred tried to take Jessie's hand; but she motioned him away sternly, and stood by her father, keenly watching all present.

"Don't talk like that, my dear," said Dick, patting his wife's shoulder, "it hurts me and makes me worse. Max means well, and he'll see to things being carried out right for all of us, won't you, Max?"

"Indeed, I will," said Max, piously; and Tom still gazed from the window.

"But—but—but do you think, Max," said Dick, drawing his hands from his wife and child, and speaking in a desultory, wandering way, as if trying to collect his thoughts, "do you think that if you came in with me as you proposed, and saw to the management of the business, so as to relieve me and let me rest, it would be necessary for me to go anywhere away from home?"

"We would take advice over that," said Max; "the best to be had—medical."

"N—no," said Dick, shrewdly, "I shouldn't quite like that, Max; those very clever doctors are too clever sometimes, and they

might want to lock me up. I should be better at home with mother here and Jessie. It would make me worse to go away."

"Oh, that could be managed, perhaps," said Max; "but you must have your business arrangements seen to—they are so important."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Dick, who trembled and looked horrified at the thought of having to go away; "but you'd make time for that. You could go halves, Max, and manage for me; and the business is growing fast—and you'd see, even if I got worse, that Jessie and mother here always had enough."

"I cannot bear this any longer!" cried Mrs. Shingle; while Jessie stood like stone.

"It's all right, mother—it's all right, mother. Max is a good fellow. When he used to row me it was to do me good. And you'll take all in hand, won't you, Max?"

"Dick, you shall not make any such arrangements," said Mrs. Shingle. "Will no one take our side?"

"I will, aunt," cried Tom, fiercely; "for I will never stand by and see such a blackguardly wrong committed. Jessie," he cried, "you have treated me badly, and behaved with cruel treachery to the man who loved you very dearly—and that's all past now; but while I've hand to lift, or voice to raise, I'll never see you or yours wronged by father—or brother," he added, fiercely turning on Fred, while Jessie uttered a loud sigh, and buried her face on her mother's shoulder.

"Tom," whispered Max, catching him by the shoulder, "if you are not silent, I'll strike you down."

"Father, if you dare to touch me," roared Tom, "God forgive me, I shall forget that you gave me birth. I will not stand by and see my uncle wronged. If he is unfit to attend to his affairs, aunt, see some trustworthy lawyer; but you shall not be imposed upon like this."

"Fred, stop him," cried Max, furiously. "Turn him out of the room. He's as mad as his uncle."

Fred hesitated for a moment, and then, stepping forward, he caught Tom by the arm.

"Here, come out!" he cried.

"Stand back!" cried Tom, huskily.

"No—out you go," cried Fred, who gathered courage on seeing his brother did not resent his attack.

"Stand back, I say!" cried Tom again.

"Out you go," repeated Fred—"you fool!"

Tom drew back for a moment, and then, as Jessie looked up, roused by a movement on her father's part, and a cry from her mother, she saw Tom's fist dart out from his shoulder, and then there was a dull sound, and Fred staggered back, tripped over a mat by the open window, and fell with a crash amongst the flower-pots in the conservatory, bringing down an avalanche in his fall.

As Tom turned, it was to see that a complete change had come over Dick, who had leaped at his brother's throat, catching him by shirt-front and white cravat, bringing him upon his knees, and shaking him with all his might.

"You damned scoundrel—you sanctified, hypocritical cheat!" shouted Dick, as he shook Max till he began to turn purple, and something white fell on the floor between his knees. "Mad, am I? Send me to an asylum, would you? Let me off if I give you half my income?"

"Help, help!" moaned Max, whose dark, smooth hair glided from his head on to the floor as Dick shook away.

"Didn't I—say—you were—a 'umbug?" cried Dick, panting, and throwing all his energies into a kick. "That was a good one for a poor wretch with softening of the brain, eh? There, now get up, and out of my house, and never darken the doors again. You aint a brother to me, and never were. Being born of the same mother only half makes brothers. I'll never own you as mine—eh? Ah, I've done, Tom, now."

Dick made no resistance as Tom dragged him away from his father; and Max got up, looking very indecent about the head, as he hastily picked up and dragged on his wig.

"You—you—shall smart for this," he mumbled. "As for you, Tom, never enter my house—"

"Be off!" roared Dick, and he made at him again.

But Tom, with a look of bitter mortification in his face, restrained him; and Max, clinging to his son Fred, hurried out of the door, leaving Mrs. Shingle trembling in a chair, where she had sunk; while Jessie knelt beside her, white as ashes, and holding her hand.

It was an ignoble plight, made more absurd by Dick, who suddenly ran to the fireplace, and took the tongs, with which he picked up something of ivory and gold, and ran to the door.

"Here, Saint Maximilian!" he shouted, "you've left your teeth;" and he threw the grinning set out with a crash into the hall.

"Take care!" cried a familiar voice; "I haven't done anything."

"What, Hopper, old man!" cried Dick, "you there?"

"Yes, I saw and heard it all—all I could," he added, stumping into the room.

Dick threw himself laughing into an easy chair, as he heard the door bang; but started up directly, as he saw Tom standing silent and mortified in the middle of the room.

"Thanky, Tom Shingle," he cried, as he held out his hand, which Tom took for a moment, and then dropped. "Ah, you're put out, of course; and I don't wonder. It's enough to rile any young fellow with stuff in him, and you've got that, and acted like a man."

Tom gazed at him in silence, but did not speak.

"He's ordered you out of his house, my lad," continued Dick. "Not pleasant between father and son. There, I aint going to abuse him," he hastened to add, as Tom made a deprecating gesture; "but don't you mind that—you acted like a man, and your conscience will set you right. Now; good-bye, my lad, and mind this: if you everwant a hundred pounds, or two hundred, or five hundred pounds, you've only got to say so to your uncle, Richard Shingle, and there it is."

"I thank you, uncle," said Tom, sadly; "but I shall not ask. Good-bye—I shall not see you again."

"Good-bye?"

"Yes. I shall go abroad, and we may never meet again. I cannot stay here now: the disgrace would break my heart. Good-bye, aunt. Good-bye, Jessie," he said, passionately.

But she heard him not; for as he hurried to the door, she sank, fainting, at her mother's knee, while Tom passed out, closely followed by Hopper, the last-comer on the scene.

CHAPTER XII.

HOPPER ON SUICIDE.

HERE, hold hard, you sir—hold hard!" cried Hopper, hooking Tom at last by the arm with his great stick.

Tom turned upon him savagely; but the old man did not move a muscle.

"Where are you going?" he said, sternly.

"To the devil!" said Tom, bitterly. "To drown myself, I think."

"Hey? Drown yourself? Well, don't try to do it on an empty stomach. I knew a man once who tried it, and he did nothing but float. Come home with me, and have a bit of dinner first."

Tom was just in the humour to be led by fate, and he could not help smiling at the old man's words. The next moment Hopper thrust his arm through the young man's, and began signalling with his stick to a passing cab, into which he thrust him.

"Get over farther," said Hopper, poking at him with his stick; and then, following, he shouted to the man, "Clement's Inn."

Nothing was said during the journey; and, on reaching the gateway, Hopper got out first, and, literally taking Tom into custody, led him to a black-looking house, and up a dingy old staircase, to a door at the top, covered with iron bands and clamps, which he unlocked, and pushed Tom into a very old-fashioned-looking room, cumbered with pictures, curiosities, and odds and ends piled up amongst the antique furniture.

"There," said Hopper, stooping to caress a cat that came rubbing itself up against his left leg, and another that purred against his right, while a third and fourth leaped

upon his back when he stooped, "this is my kennel—cat's kennel, if you like—I've got eight. That's their garden," he continued, throwing open a sliding window that looked upon a parapet; "they can run for miles along the roofs of the houses here. Good view here, Tom Shingle. Ah! the very thing," he added, catching the young man's sleeve; "look down there—eighty feet, and good firm stones at the bottom. You say you want to go to the devil—jump down; I won't stop you."

Tom glanced down, and turned away with a shudder.

"Well, it would make a nasty mess on the stones, certainly," said Hopper, looking at him curiously, while the cats rubbed and purred about them; "but they'd soon sweep that away; and the dead-house is close by. I'll go as witness."

"For God's sake, hold your tongue!" cried Tom.

"Hey? Hold my tongue? Why? Better and quicker than jumping into the river, and struggling up and down, and wanting to get out; besides running the risk of floating up and down with the tide, and looking like swollen bagpipes."

"Be silent!" shouted Tom, gazing at him in horror.

"What for?" chuckled the old man. "You'd look so ugly, too, with your nose rubbed off. Tide always rubs their noses off against the barges, and ships, and piers of bridges. I know lots of people wouldn't drown themselves if they knew how ugly they'd look when they were dead. I've seen 'em dozens of times."

"Do you find any pleasure in tormenting me?" cried Tom, furiously.

"Torment you, hey? Not I," chuckled

Hopper. "You said you were going to drown yourself—that takes nearly five minutes; and they may fish you out with a boathook and bring you to, which they say isn't pleasant. I only suggested a quicker way."

Tom turned from the window, and threw himself into a chair.

"Ah, you're better," said Hopper, poking the fire up brightly.

"Better!" groaned Tom.

"Yes, ever so much. You're not fretting about your father, but about Jessie—you're in love."

Tom was starting up, but the old man forced him back into his chair.

"Sit still, you young fool, you are in love, aren't you?"

"I suppose so," said Tom, bitterly.

"I'll give you a dose for the complaint," chuckled the old fellow; when there was a knock at the door, which he opened, and a neat-looking servant bustled in and spread the table with the snowiest of cloths and brightest of old-fashioned glass and silver, ending by placing the first portion of a capitally-cooked dinner on the table, and sending all the cats out of the window into the gutter, where they sat down patiently in a row, to gaze solemnly through the panes of glass till the repast was at an end.

"Why, I thought you were very poor!" said Tom, gazing curiously at his shabbily-dressed host, as he opened a massive carved oak cellaret, and took out a bottle of Burgundy that looked as old as the receptacle.

"Hey? Thought I was poor? More fool you! you're always thinking stupid things. You've gone about nearly two years thinking Jessie don't care for you."

Tom started as if he had been stung; but he sank back in his chair, gazing wonderingly at the quaint old fellow, as he opened the bottle to pour out a couple of large glasses of the generous fluid, and began wondering how much he knew.

"There, you handsome, young, long-eared donkey!" cried Hopper, placing one glass in the young man's fingers—"that's the finest Burgundy to be got for love or money. That'll give you strength of mind, and blood to sustain, and make you take a

less bilious view of things than you do now. Catch hold! I'm an old-fashioned one, I am. Here's a toast. Are you ready?"

Tom took the glass, and nodded.

"Here's my darling little Jessie. God bless her! and may she soon be happy with the man of her choice."

He looked maliciously at the young man as he spoke; but Tom set down his glass untasted.

"I can't drink that," he said, sternly.

"Hey? Not drink it? Why not?"

"Because if she marries my brother, she will never be a happy woman," said Tom, sadly.

"Bah! Idiot! Young fool!" chuckled Hopper. "She won't marry Fred Shingle. I'd sooner poison her. Drink. You care for her, don't you?"

"I do," said Tom, fervently.

"Then drink to her happiness, and don't be a selfish ass. If you can't have her, don't grudge the pretty little sweet bit of fruit to some one else. Drink."

"Jessie!" said Tom, softly and reverently.

Then he drained his glass.

"Ha! ha! ha! You're getting better," chuckled Hopper; "and I shall make you well before I've done."

Certainly, a great change did come over Tom Shingle as he partook of the excellent dinner brought in hot and hot by the neat servant; the old fellow seeming to be far less hard of hearing than usual, and chuckling and laughing as he took his wine freely, opened a fresh bottle, and finally brought out pipes and cigars, as the dinner was replaced by dessert.

"Thought I was poor, did you, Tom, my boy?" he cried, slapping the other on the knee. "I'm not, you see; but that's my secret. I never bring anybody here hardly. Your father has never been, nor your uncle Dick neither. Lucky dog: he's made lots of money and goes on, too—and hang me if I know how."

"The same way as you, perhaps," said Tom, smiling.

"No, that he don't. I do a bit in the City, and speculate in a few bills occasionally. I've got paper with names on that would startle you, I'll be bound."

"I dare say," said Tom, sadly.

"There—there, man, fill another glass. You're coming out bad with your old complaint again—love sick."

"Ah!" cried Tom, who had got into the confidential stage, like his host. "You don't know what it means."

"I don't know what it means?" cried the old fellow, rising, and leaning his hands on the table as he set down his pipe. "Look there, Tom Shingle—look there," he cried, crossing to a drawer, unlocking it hastily, and taking out an old-fashioned miniature of a very beautiful woman.

"My grandmother!" said Tom, starting, as he held the portrait to the light.

"And my love," said the old fellow, in a softened, changed voice. "Yes, Tom, I loved her very dearly, as dearly as I hated the man who took her from me. Not that she ever cared for me. Tom, she was an angel. Your grandfather was a scoundrel, and the blood of the two has run its different courses. Women somehow like scoundrels," he said, as he reverently put away the miniature.

"They do," groaned Tom.

"But not all, Tom—not all. There, man, fill up and drink. Here's my little darling Jessie—your darling, if you're the man I take you for."

"If you talk like that, I must go," said Tom.

"Hey? What, go? Stuff, man! Have a little faith. I don't say Jessie's perfect; but she's a better girl than you believe her. Try her again, man."

Tom shook his head.

"Fred is always there in my light."

"Turn him out of it, then. Bah! You weak boy! You imagine twice as much as you have any grounds for. Take my advice, or leave it—I don't care which. I only give you the hint for your own sake. Puss, puss, puss!"

He got up, opened the window, and the cats came trooping in, to leap upon him and show their delight, while he petted first one and then another as they thrust their heads

into his hands, Tom sitting back and watching him curiously the while.

"Curious, isn't it?" said Hopper, chuckling. "But a man must have friends. I've got very few, so I take to cats, and they are as faithful as truth. Capital things to keep, Tom, my lad. Ha! ha! ha! Only behave well to them, and it don't matter how great a scoundrel you are, they never find you out, nor believe what the world says—they stick to you to the end."

At last Tom took another glance round the quaint room, to see dozens of fresh objects at every look—old china, ancient weapons, curious watches, besides articles of *vertu* that must have been of great value, and the old fellow chuckled as he saw the direction of his glances.

"Queer place to live in, Tom, and queer things about. Look here, my lad—here's my will. I keep it here in this old canister, just where it can be found ready for my executors. What? Hey? Going? Well, good-bye. Come again, Tom—often—I shall be glad to see you."

"Do you mean this?" said Tom, returning the old man's warm pressure of the hand.

"Hey?"

"I say, do you mean it?"

"Oh, yes! I heard. Mean it? Of course I do, man, or I shouldn't ask you. Only, I mean, come in a sensible guise, not in a ghostly form. None of your drowned ghosts, without their noses. I mean you in the flesh, not in the spirit."

"You need have no fear," said Tom, sadly. "My mad fit is past. I should not be guilty of such folly."

"I should think not!" said Hopper, laughing. "We make nearly all our own troubles, my boy, and then men are such cowards that they run away from them. Have another cigar. That's right—light up, Tom. Good-bye, lad. I say, why don't you go round by your uncle's house, and have a peep at some one's window? There, be off; you're a poor coward of a lover, after all!"



CHAPTER XIII.

PRIVATE INQUIRY.

SEVERAL weeks passed, and poor Jessie seemed to have received a serious shock from the encounter that took place at her father's house, and for days together she would be depressed, silent, and stand at the window watching, as if in expectation of some one coming. Then an interval of feverish gaiety would set in, during which, with brightened eye, she would chat, and play, and sing, evincing so much mirth that Dick would shake his head to his wife, and declare it was a bad sign.

"It's all fretting, mother," he would say. "She's thinking of that scamp, Fred Shingle."

Whereupon Mrs. Shingle would shake her head in turn, and declare, tartly, that he knew nothing at all about it, for she was sure it was Tom.

"You are very clever, no doubt, Dick, at keeping secrets, and hiding things away from your wife—"

"That's right," said Dick. "Go it! I wish I was poor again."

"But you know no more about that poor girl's feelings than you do of Chinese."

"Well, I don't know much about Chinese, mother, certainly," said Dick; "but I'm sure it aint Tom. How can it be?"

"I don't know how it can be," said Mrs. Shingle, tartly, "or how it can't be; but fretting after Tom Shingle she is, and it's my belief he's very fond of her."

"There you go," said Dick, who was warming himself, with his back to the fire, waiting for the object of their solicitude to come down to dinner, for she had been lying down the greater part of the day—"there you go, mother, a-showing yourself up, and contradicting common sense. I say it's after Fred she's fretting."

"I know you do," said Mrs. Shingle, tightening her lips, and giving her head a shake, which plainly said—"I'll die before I'll give in."

"Let me have one word in, mother, if it's only edgewise," cried Dick.

"There, go on—I know what you are going to say."

"No, you don't, mother; so don't aggravate. I say it's Fred."

"I know you do."

"For this reason. He's forbid the house, and I won't have it; for I hear nothing but ill spoken of him, and I won't have him here. He aint worthy of her. So he can't come, and she, poor girl, frets about it; and if she don't get better I shall have to give in. Now, you say it's Tom."

"Yes," said Mrs. Shingle, nodding her head.

"Well, then, why don't he come, or why don't she send for him and make it right? Can't you see that if it were as you say, all would be right directly, for he'd come?"

Mrs. Shingle shook her head.

"That's right; be obstinate, mother, when you know there's nothing to prevent his coming. Oh! here she is."

Jessie came in directly, looking very pale and sweet in her sadness; her eyes were sunken with wakefulness, but she had a smile for father and mother, and an affectionate kiss before taking her place at the table; where, after kicking himself in his misery, Dick set to, pretending not to notice his child's depression, though he felt a bitter pang at his heart, as he was guilty of every bit of clowning in his efforts to bring a smile from the suffering girl's eyes.

At times, though, he was very absent, and his tongue went on talking at random—of the last thing, perhaps, that he had seen—while his mind was far away. In fact, had his brother been present, with witnesses, he would have had strong grounds for saying that Dick's brain was softening at the very least.

He began with grace, standing up, and very reverently said the customary formula, ending "truly thankful. Amen. Pure pickles, sauces, and jams," he continued,

for his eye had lit upon the label of a bottle in the sauce stand.

He started the next moment, and looked round, with one hand in his breast, to see if the string of his dickey was all right, for he occasionally put on one of those delusive articles of linen attire when he dressed for dinner, and always went in torture for the rest of the evening, on account of the treacherous nature of the garment—one which invariably seeks to betray the weakness of a man's linen-closet by bursting off strings or creeping insidiously round under his arm. In fact, one of Richard Shingle's, on a certain evening, deposited the bottom of the well-starched plaits in his soup, by making a dive out from within his vest as he leaned down.

"Glass of wine, Jessie," said Dick, as the dinner went on; and to oblige him the poor girl took a little, just as Mrs. Shingle exclaimed—

"Bless me, I have no handkerchief! Did you take my handkerchief, Jessie?"

"Lor! mother, don't talk of your handkerchief as if it was a pill. You do roll 'em up pretty tight, but not quite so bad as that."

Union Jack, who was waiting at table, exploded in a burst of laughter, which he tried to hide by rattling the dish covers together, and then turning uncomfortable, as his master gave him a severe frown.

"A good servant, John, never hears what takes place at his master's table."

"No, sir—yes, sir," said John; "but you do say such funny things."

And the dinner went on.

"What's the pudden, my dear?" said Dick, at last.

"It's a new kind," said Mrs. Shingle. "You'll have some? I told the cook how to make it."

"That I will, and so will Jessie. I always like your puddens, mother, they make one feel so good while one's eating them—they're so innocent."

"You've not seen any more of your brother, I suppose," said Mrs. Shingle, just then, inadvertently.

"Well, I have seen him," said Dick, "twice. He's up to some little game, mother."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that he's got a man always watching me. He follows me like my shadow. Private detective, I should say. He wants to find out my secret, or else he's going to try on his little game again; but I'm not afraid. Jessie, my gal, what is it?"

"Nothing, father, nothing," she said, trying to smile, as she rose from the table. "The room is too hot. I think I'll go upstairs."

"I'll go with you, my darling," exclaimed Mrs. Shingle; but Jessie insisted on her staying, and she had her own way, going up to sit at her window, as was her wont, to watch wistfully along the darkened road for the relief that seemed as if it would never come.

She had been there about an hour, when suddenly she started up, and gazed down excitedly into the garden, where she could plainly make out the figure of a man; and as she looked he raised his hands to her, and sharply beckoned her to come down.

"At last!" she cried, with a look of joy flashing from her eyes; and, going to the door, she listened for a few moments, hesitated, and then went down to the breakfast-room, which opened with French windows on to the garden, unfastened one, and in the dim light a figure passed in rapidly, and closed the door behind him.

There were two men standing in the shadow of a gate on the other side, one of whom scribbled something quickly on a page of a note-book, and gave it to the other, with the words—

"Run—first cab! and lose not a moment."

A quarter of an hour later, just as Dick and his wife were about to leave the dining-room; there was a sharp knock at the door, followed by the trampling of feet in the hall, and Union Jack's voice heard in protestation—

"I tell you he's at dinner, and won't be disturbed. Master always gives strict orders that—"

"Tell your master that Mr. Maximilian Shingle insists upon seeing him on business."

"Does he?" said Dick, sharply.

And he stood at the door, looking at his brother, and flourishing his dinner napkin

about, as his eyes lit upon the two companions of Max; and a nervous feeling akin to alarm came upon him, as he saw that they were two well-dressed, keen-looking men.

"They're mad doctors—both of 'em," thought Dick, "and they're going to listen to what I say, sign certificates, and have me dragged away. They'll have a tough job of it if they do, though," he said. "Yes, and there's the carriage just come up that's to take me off," he thought, as there was the noise of wheels stopping at the door. "Don't open that door, John," he cried.

But he was too late; for the boy had opened it on the instant, and before he could shut it, old Hopper, closely followed by Tom, entered the hall.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Dick, nodding, and feeling relieved.

"Hey? Yes, it's me," said Hopper, quietly. "We thought we'd just drop in."

"Well, then, Mr. Max Shingle, perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me what you want, disturbing me at my dinner?" said Dick, sharply.

"Well, the fact is," said Max, smiling maliciously, but rubbing his hands and trying to look smooth the while, "these gentlemen and I—"

"Let's see," said Dick, coolly; for he felt now that he was well backed up. "But, stop a moment. John, my lad, fetch a policeman."

"By all means," said Max, eagerly. "Get one, my boy."

Union Jack, who had been staring with open eyes, unfastened the door, to find one outside, beating his gloves together, probably attracted by the scent of something going on.

"Here's one outside, sir," cried the boy, eagerly.

"That's right," said Dick. "Here, you Number something, come in. You're to see fair over this, my man."

He nodded to Tom and Hopper, who were both singularly silent, and then turned to Max, as the front door was closed, and Mrs. Shingle stood half in the dining-room, a wondering spectator of the strange proceedings.

"Now, Mr. Max, if you please," said

Dick, quietly, "proceed. You say these gentlemen—who I know again: they've been watching me, I suppose, to make up a case, ever since that little brotherly quarrel of ours; and now, I suppose, they've found it all out."

"You shall hear what they've found out directly," said Max, rubbing his hands.

"My secret, I suppose," said Dick, laughing. "Well, I don't mind that."

"It will be a lesson to a disobedient son, too," said Max, turning and darting a withering look at Tom. "One who fortunately happens to be here."

"Well, when you've got through the introductory matter, or described the symptoms," said Dick, laughing, "perhaps you'll administer the pill. Your friends are mad doctors, I suppose?"

Max laughed derisively, and the taller of the two men, a curious-looking fellow, whose ears stood out at either side of his head so that you could look into them, in a sharp, businesslike way took out his pocket-book, and presented a card to Dick.

"That is my name and address, sir," he said—"E. Gilderoy, private inquiry agent. This is one of my assistants."

"Thanky," said Dick, smiling. "Now, then, let's have an inquiry in private."

Max hesitated for a moment, and then went on.

"The fact is, Mr. Richard Shingle, I have employed these gentlemen to—"

"I know—watch me," said Dick, quietly. "There, you needn't shrink, Max, I was quite satisfied with the thrashing I gave you before, and if I want you turned out I shall set Number something to work."

"I am accustomed to your insults," said Max, "so say what you like. I say, I employed these gentlemen in the interest of your wife and child as much as in that of the family, since you are so imbecile that you cannot take care of yourself."

"All right, go on," said Dick, coolly picking his teeth. "I don't care, say what you like—I deserve something for that kicking I gave you."

"And these gentlemen have reported to me that for many nights past your house has had a man lurking about it, evidently for no good purpose."

"One of these two, I suppose," said Dick, contemptuously.

"Your interruptions are most ungentlemanly," said Max.

"Besides us, sir," said Mr. Gilderoy, nodding at his assistant.

"Yes, sir, besides us," said that worthy.

"This evening the matter culminated in the man gaining entrance to your house," said Max, with a malignant look in his eye.

"Nonsense!" cried Dick.

"Oh, no," said Max, with a half-laugh, "it's truth."

"I don't believe it," cried Dick. "I'll question the servants."

"There is no need," said Max, maliciously; "you had better search the house, for he is here still."

"It's a lie—an invention!" cried Dick, indignantly.

"He! he! he!—you'd better ask Miss Jessie if it is," said Max, laughing.

"Ask—ask Jessie?" cried Dick, looking from one to the other. "What do you mean? To dare to insult—oh, I won't have it. Who dares say anything of the kind?"

"Fact, sir," said the private inquirer, sharply. "Young lady, sitting at window on first-floor, sits there every evening watching along the road."

"Yes," said Dick, in a bewildered way. "She does—but—"

"To-night, at seven fifty-six, tall gent in dark coat came up, jumped the railing, crossed the flower-bed, and made signs."

There was a pause, and Tom sighed deeply.

"Dark gent, with big whiskers, something like this gent, sir," said the private inquirer, pointing to Tom.

"Was it you, Tom?" said Dick, with his old puzzled look growing more distinct upon his lined brow.

"No, uncle," said Tom, hoarsely; and then to himself—"Would to God it had been!"

"Oh, no, sir, not this gent," said the private inquirer, referring to his note-book—"something like him, but not him. He signals to the lady at the window. Lady comes down. Lady opens breakfast-room window."

"How the devil do you know which is the breakfast-room?" cried Dick, savagely.

"My duty to know, sir," said the man in the most unruffled way. "That's the breakfast-room door, sir. Gent goes in through window—shuts it after him; and he didn't come out."

"How do you know?" cried Dick.

"Men watching back and front, sir," said the private inquirer, imperturbably.

"Well, Max, and if some one did, what then?" said Dick. "Suppose a policeman or some one comes to see one of the maids."

"He! he! he! you had better turn him out," said Max. "I should search the room."

"That's soon done," said Dick, throwing open the door. "Here, John, a lighter."

The boy lit a taper at the hall lamp, and a couple of the burners in the breakfast-room being lit, they entered, to discover nothing.

"There," said Dick, wiping the perspiration from his face, "you see there is no one here. I won't have any more of your poll-prying about. You pay men to see things, Max, and they see them."

"That's an aspersion on my word, sir," said the private inquirer, sharply.

"Serve you right," cried Dick, fiercely. "What do you come watching for? No one else saw, I'll swear. You saw nobody come in, did you, Hopper?—nor you, Tom Shingle?"

Neither answered, and Dick grew more and more excited.

"I won't have it," he cried. "I'll have the house cleared."

"Without clearing your daughter's name?" said Max, with a sneer.

"Clear my daughter's name? It wants no clearing," cried Dick, angrily; and now his nervous, weak manner was thrown off, and he stood up proud and defiant. "Here, stop! You, Tom Shingle, and you, Hopper; I won't have you go, if it comes to that."

"I would rather go," said Tom, sadly.

"But I say you shall not go."

"Uncle," said Tom, and he spoke in a low whisper, "let me go, for Heaven's sake—I cannot bear it."

"No," said Dick, sternly; "you shall not go till this has been set right. Do you, too, believe ill of my girl?"

"God forbid, uncle. I only wanted to know that my case was hopeless, and I have seen."

"Seen what?" whispered Dick.

"What you have heard," said Tom, bitterly.

"Do you dare to say—"

"I say nothing, uncle—only that what those men have said is true."

"Here," cried Dick, furiously, "mother, quick—tell Jessie to come here. Oh, you are there," he cried, as, hearing a door close on the landing, he looked up, and saw Jessie standing there.

"Uncle, for Heaven's sake think of what you are doing," cried Tom, catching his arm.

"I am thinking, sir, of clearing her name. My girl would not be guilty of—"

He stopped short; for he recalled the little incident in the old home.

"I don't care," he cried, passionately. "I'm driven to it, and it shall be sifted to the bottom."

As he spoke, he ran up the stairs, closely followed by Max and his private inquirers.

"Mr. Hopper," cried Tom, passionately, "this is your doing, to bring me in here. I can't bear it. Come away. This is cruel to her."

"Hey? cruel?—I don't care," said Hopper, sturdily. "I'll see it out; for look here, Tom Shingle—and you, too, Mrs. Richard—I say, as I've said before, she'll come out of it clear as day. Now, come up."

He stumped hastily upstairs, Tom feeling compelled to follow, but hating himself for the part he was playing, the result of hanging about the house evening after evening, for the sake of catching a glimpse of Jessie, and then telling Hopper that evening what he had seen.

The old man had been astounded when, half-frantic, Tom had met him on his way to Richard Shingle, and then insisted upon his coming to have the matter cleared up, vowing that there was a mistake; and the result was the encounter we have seen.

As the party reached the large landing,

Jessie stood in front of the door of her room, the policeman—helmet on head—being the last to complete the half-circle that surrounded her; and then Dick spoke.

"Jessie, my darling," he said, tenderly, "I know this will upset you; but, my girl, when cruel conspiracies are hatched against us by scoundrels, we must meet them boldly."

"Yes, father," said Jessie, who did not shrink, but darted a reproachful look at Tom that went to his heart.

"Your uncle, to stab your fair fame, my gal, has brought these men to swear that they saw you let in some one to-night by the breakfast-room window; and they say he has not gone out. Speak out, my gal, and tell them it's a lie."

There was no reply, and Mrs. Shingle caught at her husband's arm; but he flushed up with passion, and shook her off.

"Jessie," he cried, in a choking voice, "speak out quick—is any one in that room of yours?"

Jessie looked wildly from face to face, her glance resting longest on those of Max and his son Tom.

"I say, is any one in that room?" thundered Dick, catching her by the wrist, which she snatched away, and, spreading her hands from post to post, as she turned her back against the door, she cried out, wildly—

"No, father, no!"

As she spoke there was a sharp creaking noise from within, as of a sash being thrown up; and Dick once more caught her by the wrist.

"No, no!" she cried, struggling with him frantically. "Tom, dear Tom, for pity's sake save me from this disgrace!"

Tom dashed forward, and caught her in his arms, more in sorrow than in anger; for Dick had swung her round with a savage oath, throwing open the door, and dashing in with the private inquiry men, to return dragging out a man with a strong resemblance to Tom, till Gilderoy gave one of his whiskers a twitch, and pulled off both, revealing the sallow, frightened countenance of Fred.



CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE DISCOVERY.

FRED!" cried his father, in alarm.
 "Yes," said his son, savagely
 —"if you must blab it out."
 "Tom, Tom," whispered
 Jessie, going on her knees to
 him, "for your own sake save
 him—he is your brother."

Tom turned from her with a
 sigh, as he freed himself from her grasp,
 and placed her hands in those of her
 mother.

"And this is my child!" groaned Dick.

"Oh, father!" cried Jessie, "don't condemn me unheard. Frederick Shingle, speak out."

"Not I," he said, cynically. "Why should I?"

"And this is my son!" exclaimed Max, who was terribly taken aback.

"There, don't cant, father," cried Fred, brutally. "I don't suppose you have always been so very particular."

"Fred!" exclaimed Tom, savagely, "it is enough that you have brought this disgrace upon your uncle, without insulting the poor girl you have injured."

"You mind your own business," cried Fred.

"It will be my business to knock you down," cried Tom, in a rage.

"Then I shall be off," said Fred, flip-pantly; and, as he spoke, he made for the head of the staircase, not noticing that a movement had been made in that direction by the private inquiry men, the principal speaking to the policeman, who nodded sapiently.

"Stop!" cried Max. "You shall not go without hearing a few words from me. I have no sons now; but you shall listen, as you are present, to advice that may—"

"Do them good," cried Dick, turning upon him savagely. "Give it them, then, in your own place, and not in mine. You coward—you pitiful miscreant! To revenge yourself on me you stoop to this low, beg-

garly watching; and when your tools warn you of your opportunity, you are such a high-toned, moral man that you come with your scoundrels to degrade and disgrace my poor gal before her father. I don't defend her—she did wrong; but I'm not a high-toned, moral man, I'm not, and I know what she has suffered; and I say to her, 'Come here, my poor darling, I'm only a weak fool, and I forgive you.'"

"Father!" cried Jessie, and she sprang to his breast.

"Yes—lie there, my darling," cried Dick, glancing round at all in turn. "Now let's see who dare say a word against you—or to touch you! You're my gal, and always will be, come what may; for blood is thicker than water. I can't cast you off—not being a high-toned, moral man—and say I have no child; but—but, my darling, I'd sooner have been back, a poor man again, in Crowder's-buildings, and bullied for my bit of rent, than this should have happened."

"Oh, hush, father—hush!" said Jessie—"wait till they're gone—wait till they're gone."

"No, my gal, I've nothing to be ashamed of," said Dick, "without it is of my brother and his sons. All the world may know that I was a poor man—a poor shoemaker, who made his fortune, but never lost his simple, ignorant ways."

"Uncle," cried Tom, "I have given you no cause to speak to me as you do."

"Well, perhaps not, my lad—perhaps not. I'd take it kindly of you and Hopper, then, if you'd clear the house and then go."

"I'll soon rid you of my company," said Fred. "Ta-ta, uncle. Good-bye, little Jess."

Dick's fist clenched as the young man approached him, and Tom saw that Jessie shrank from him as if with loathing, though she watched his movements with a strange, keen interest.

He laughed lightly as he passed, and then started back in alarm, for the policeman

placed his hands across from the balustrade to the wall.

"One moment, please, sir. This is your photograph, I think?"

He held up a card, and Fred pushed it down and tried to leap past; but the policeman caught him in his arms and forced him back.

"Oh, no, you don't, sir," said the constable, laughing. "E. Gilderoy, send your men down to keep the door. The fact is, Frederick Shingle, *alias* Captain Leroux, *alias* the Hon. Algernon Bracy, there's a warrant out against you, and two-fifty reward. We only knew this afternoon that you were F. Shingle, and you were to have been took this evening; but the job has fallen to us."

"Man, you are mad, or drunk."

"I dare say I am," said the constable, laughing, "but Mr. Gilderoy and me means to have that two-fifty."

"Father—uncle—Tom—this is a lie—an imposition!" cried Fred, wildly glancing round for a means of escape, but seeing none.

"No, sir," said the constable, "it was them forged bills was lies and impositions."

"Constable, this is all nonsense—some trumped-up case!" cried Max. "An invention, perhaps, of the poor boy's uncle," he added, malignantly.

"Oh, no, it is not, sir; the game's been going on for close upon two years, only my gentleman here has been too clever to be caught. There's over two thou. been discounted. It's all right."

"Fred," cried Max, "why don't you knock this lying scoundrel down?"

"Don't want to bruise my knuckles," said Fred, carelessly. "There, the game's up, and I'm sick of it."

"What?" cried Max.

"It's all right, father," said Fred, calmly. "I had the cake, so I must pay for it."

"You lost reprobate!" cried Max, furiously; "do you dare to own to my face that this is true?"

"True enough," said Fred, taking out his cigar case. "I can smoke, I suppose, constable?"

"Oh, yes, sir, and make much of it,"

said the man, grinning. "I don't suppose you'll get another—not *just* yet."

"Good heavens, that it should come to this!" cried Max, turning up his hands towards the ceiling. "Lost, depraved, reckless boy; you bring down your father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

"What!" shrieked Fred, with a sneering laugh.

"After the Christian home in which you have been brought up! Oh, lost, lost, villainous prodigal!"

"Look here, father!" cried Fred. "Slang me, if you like, for being an unlucky scoundrel; but, curse it, give me none of your sickly cant."

"Away with him, constable—his very presence makes me loathe the day when I became a father. Out of my sight, wretch. I disown and curse you!" cried Max.

"Take your case back," shrieked Fred, savagely. "Example—Christian home! What of the office? What has been done there? Where is Violante's money?"

Max stepped back with his jaw fallen.

"Where is the five hundred pounds the old man in Australia sent for Uncle Dick? Example, indeed!"

"What?" cried Dick, starting forward. "Say that again."

"Say it again!" shrieked Fred, who was now mad with rage. "I say two five hundreds were sent by an old relative in Australia for you and him, and he kept them both."

"It's a lie—a base lie!" cried Max, foaming at the mouth.

"Oh, Max, Max, Max," said Dick, sadly, "and when I was close to starving!"

"It's a lie, I say!" cried Max.

"It's the truth, you pitiful scoundrel!" said old Hopper. "But I made you disgorge some of it again."

"What, you turn against me, too!" cried Max, furiously. "I say it's a lie—a conspiracy. No money was sent; there was no uncle to send it."

"No?" said Hopper, quietly. "Well, I can prove it all; for I sent the money for the sake of Dick here, and to try you both."

"I tell you it's a lie," shrieked Max, foaming at the mouth.

"You've got to prove it one," said Fred,

carelessly. "Come along, constable—let's be off. Here's my last half-crown. I'll go in a cab."

"Stop," cried Dick, whose face was now puzzlement *in excelsis*. "I won't have it. I forgive Max. I forgive Fred here. I've plenty of money, constable. Can't it be arranged? I'll—I'll pay the reward."

"No, sir," said the constable; "not if you doubled it."

"But I will double it, constable," cried Dick.

"Hold hard, uncle," said Fred, smiling. "It's no go. The game's up. But you always were a trump—always. Thank you for it. Sorry I've disgraced you. Tom, old man, it's all right. Uncle, it's all right about your little girl here. I came to-night, and she admitted me, thinking it was Tom; and as soon as I was inside I told her the police were after me, unless she could help me to escape. There's the bag inside, with her purse and the pearls she gave me to sell, watch and chain, and the rest of it; for I was off across the herring-pond if I could get away. Fetch it out."

Tom ran into Jessie's room, and brought out a little travelling bag which lay beneath the open window.

"I didn't like to jump it," said Fred, laughing. "It was too high; but I should try if I had another chance."

"Fred—brother!" cried Tom, passionately, as he held out his hand; and Fred seized it for a moment, and then flung it away.

"No, Tom; let me be. I've always been a bad one. As for you, little Jessie—God bless you! you were a little trump. I told her it would disgrace you all, and poor Tom, if I was taken; and she told a lie to save me. Good-bye, little Jessie," he said, holding out his hand.

Jessie ran forward and took it, and he tried to speak in a light, cavalier manner; but his voice faltered, and he had to make an effort to keep from breaking down.

"Good-bye, Fred," said Tom, stepping before him, as if to shake hands. Then, forcing the little bag into his grasp, he whispered, "Run for it, Fred—the window. I'll cover you—run."

As he spoke, he gave his brother a push

into the bed-room, and then faced round with clenched fists.

For a moment the men were paralyzed, but the next they flung themselves on Tom.

Gilderoy was nearest, and a blow sent him rolling over; but the constable evaded a second blow, and closed with Tom in a fierce struggle, which, taking place at the doorway, prevented the next man from forcing his way through.

Mrs. Shingle shrieked; but Jessie stood firm, gazing with dilating eyes at her lover, as he wrestled bravely with the policeman, whom he kept between himself and the second man, still covering his brother's flight.

They were well matched, and victory might have been on the constable's side but for the action of Dick, who, seeing the second man about to leap on Tom, thrust out his foot, and laid him sprawling.

It was unfortunate for Tom, though. The man was so near that he tripped over him, and lay for the moment half-stunned; while now all three rushed into the room and to the open window.

"Below there!" cried Gilderoy—"have you seen him?"

"No," was the reply. "He came down with a crash, though, into the shrubs here, and I think he's hurt—he hasn't moved since. Come down, and bring a light."

Jessie's window looked down upon a great clump of lilacs, into which it seemed that Fred must have jumped; and, running back to the landing, the three men dashed downstairs, through Dick's studio, into the conservatory, and thence to the enclosed back garden.

As they did so, Fred glided out from behind the hangings, placed his hand to his lips, and bounded down the staircase, almost into his brother's arms.

Tom saw the ruse, seized a coat and hat from the stand, and opened the front door.

"Cabstand at the corner," he whispered. "Walk—don't run."

Fred went leisurely out, and as Tom closed the door the private inquiry man came back, and placed himself as sentinel to guard that which had gone.

The search went on for a few moments outside, and then there was a shout.

"They've got him," cried the sentry, eagerly. "Got him?" he shouted.

"No," cried the constable, running into the hall, hot and panting. "He threw a great ottoman out of the window, and didn't jump. Keep that door; we must search the house."

The search began, and it was not until every nook and corner had been hunted over that the men stood looking at one another in the hall.

"A pretty mess you've made of this, Mr. Gilderoy!" cried the constable, at last.

"Two-fifty thrown into the gutter by your bad management," groaned the other.

"P'r'aps you'd better go and search all London now," said Hopper, with a quiet sneer, "for he can't be far off."

The men turned upon him, angrily.

"We haven't done yet," said the constable.

"We must have some one for this. The law can't be resisted when its officials are at work."

"I'm ready to give up," said Tom, quietly.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," cried Hopper, hastily pushing him away. "Here, you there; don't be fools. Come in here. The man's gone—off by the front door. What have you got to say to that?"

"I must have some one," said the constable, surlily.

"Hey? Have some one?" cried Hopper. "Then have me."

They followed the old fellow into the dining-room, where a little private inquiry went on; and the result was that soon after they left the house, evidently having forgotten to call Tom's behaviour into question; while as for Max, he had not been seen to go, which Dick said was a blessing in disguise, as the meeting might have been painful.

CHAPTER XV.

JESSIE'S MALADY.



ICANNOT forgive myself," wrote Tom to Dick—and the latter read the note aloud—"I feel, uncle, that I have wronged her twice in thought most bitterly, and that I dare not hope for her forgiveness till time has enabled me to prove myself more worthy of her—"

"Read more loudly, and don't mumble," said Hopper, who was present.

"Tell her, uncle, that I love her dearly—more dearly than ever; and some day, if she has not made another choice, I may come and ask you all, humbly, if you can forget the past, ignore the misfortunes of my family, and give me room to hope that there is a happy future where at present all looks black."

"I've read that ten times over," said Dick, "and hang me if I know what it means. It's too fine and sentimental for me. Why, if he was half the man I took

him for, he'd come down here and say, 'Uncle, blood's thicker than water, shall we say wiped out to all that's gone by?—because, if so, 'ere's my 'art and 'ere's my 'and.'"

"Hey?"

"'Ere's my 'art and 'ere's my 'and," roared Dick.

"And what should you say to that?" chuckled Hopper.

"I should say, 'Tom, my lad, I don't want your 'art, and I don't want your 'and, for I've got a 'art as is, I hope, a warm one, and I've got a 'and to offer to the man I can believe in and trust. Take yours somewheres else, and offer 'em where they may be taken.'"

Dick winked at his friend, and jerked his thumb over his shoulder, where, seen dimly in the farther room, were Jessie and Mrs. Shingle—Dick having taken a house at Hastings, and come down for change, he said, but really on account of the weak state of Jessie's health; and now he and his friend

were having a pipe together in the inner room.

"He's too proud," said Hopper; "he's as proud as Lucifer. He won't come and ask till he's made money, and can be independent."

"That's where he's such a fool," said Dick. "Of course I'm not going to say 'Come down and marry my gal,' who's dying to have him; but blood's thicker than water, and he can have her when he likes; and as to money, why, there's enough for them too."

"Tom won't want for money," said Hopper, blowing out a great cloud.

"Oh, won't he?" said Dick. "Well, a good job, too. What's become of Fred?"

"Married that violent girl, who was dead on him, and went and joined him as soon as she knew he was in trouble."

"Did she, though?" said Dick. "Well, 'ang me if I ever liked her, with her twisted eyes, till now; but that was a good one. Hopper, Max spent all that poor gal's money, which was hard on her. Could you get to let her have a hundred pounds if I give you a cheque? You can come those dodges of sending money on the sly most artfully."

"He! he! he!" chuckled Hopper, as Dick poked him in the side with his pipe-stem. "No, no, no, Dick, they are in America by now; and Fred will be better without money. Make him work."

He began to fill his pipe as he spoke.

"I never could make out how it was he got off so easily to America. The police wasn't half sharp; but it was a good job. How about the extra tradition, as they called it?"

"Hey? Extradition?" said Hopper. "Ha! there was a reason for that."

He opened his pocket-book, took out a slip of blue paper, folded it, and, striking a match, lit the paper, and held it to his pipe.

"I say," said Dick, "what's that you're burning?"

"An old bill," was the reply—"I'm using 'em up by degrees."

"An old bill?" said Dick; for Hopper looked at him curiously.

"Yes," said Hopper, "I've done a deal in bills. This is one of ten—of Fred's—I bought 'em—for his grandmother's sake," he added, softly.

Dick stretched out his hand, grasped the other's, and then turned his chair, to have a look at a ship in the offing, which seemed quite blurred.

"Dick, Dick!" cried Mrs. Shingle, in a loud voice.

"Yes, yes—what?" he cried, starting up, and running in, to find poor Jessie lying white as ashes in her mother's arms.

"Quick!" cried Mrs. Shingle; "tell—tell the doctor—this is the second time to-day! Dick, Dick!" she cried, passionately; "she's dying!"

Old Hopper was the most active of the party, but long for the doctor could be brought Jessie to revive, but only in a restless way, gazing out to sea; while when the medical man left, it was with solemn shake of the head, which sent a chill to the hearts of Dick and his spouse.

They had been sitting by their child for about an hour, when old Hopper came in, and stood looking down at her in a quiet, unsympathizing way.

"I've come to say good-bye," he said, roughly.

"Good-bye?" said Dick. "Why, you only came yesterday."

"I know," he said; "but I'm no good here. Good-bye, my girl. I wish you better."

She half raised her head to kiss him, and the old man bent down and pressed his lips to hers very tenderly, before leaving the room, closely followed by Dick.

"I know it's a dreary place to come to, Hopper," he said; "and we've only had one tune-up together; but when she's—better—Hopper, old man, if I wrote and asked Tom to come, would it be wrong?"

"Hey? Wrong? Yes. Don't do anything of the sort. Hey? What's that?"

"Only a letter for Max. I hear he's laid up. Don't let him know who sent it—that's all."

The old man nodded, and held out his hand.

"Do you know why I'm going in such a hurry?" he said.

"No," was the reply.

"I'll tell you," said Hopper. "If that girl's left like that, she'll die. I'm going to send her the best doctor in town."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BEST DOCTOR IN LONDON.

TEN minutes after Hopper was at the station, where he telegraphed one short message, climbed slowly into his seat, reached the terminus at Cannon-street in due time, and on being driven to his chambers found Tom waiting for him.

"How is she?" cried Tom, eagerly, as the cats crowded round their master.

"Dying!" said Hopper, briefly.

"Dying?" cried Tom, in an agonized voice.

"Yes. I've come for the best doctor in London."

"And you sit still there!" cried Tom.

"Have you sent him?"

"No," said Hopper, coolly. "Wait a minute. Tom, my lad, do you think you can throw away your pride to save her?"

"I'd throw away my life," he cried, passionately.

"That wouldn't save hers. Here, take this. Quick—there's a hundred pounds. Take it, you young fool! Go down at once to her, and throw away all nonsense. Tell her you love her; ask her to forgive you; and—"

"Yes—yes," cried Tom. "Go on."

"And marry her, you young idiot!" cried the old fellow.

"But a train?" cried Tom, despairingly.

"It will be too late to-night."

"You have the money, if necessary take a special," said the old man. "What's fifty or a hundred pounds to happiness, or life?"

Tom caught the old fellow's hand in his, and he retained it.

"Stop one moment, my lad," he said. "You feel some pride about your brother's disgrace. I was burning these by degrees. See—the last of the forged bills."

He took six from his pocket-book, and burned them.

"There," he said, "that disgrace is dead, and you can go with a happier heart. Per-

haps I shall come down next week. Be off."

Tom bounded down the stairs, leaped into the first cab, and bade the man gallop to London-bridge Station.

"All right, sir," he said, touching his hat.

The little door in the roof was slammed down, there was a flick of the long whip, and for about half a minute the horse broke into a short canter, one which subsided into a walk a few minutes later.

A loud rattling at the top of the cab spurred the driver to fresh exertions, and once more the wretched horse cantered, but dropped again into a trot, and there was an end of it. Tom had to sit and fume, as at every turn he seemed to be hemmed in by other vehicles; and, no matter how the driver tried, there was always a huge, heavily-laden van in front, blocking up the way.

"I think I'll take a short cut round by the side streets, sir," said the cabman. "The streets is werry full to-night."

"Anything to get there quickly," exclaimed Tom. And the driver turned out of the main thoroughfare, and began to dodge in and out of wretched streets, all of which seemed ill-lighted, and so strongly resembling the one the other, that Tom soon grew bewildered, and sat back thinking, and trying to arrange his thoughts.

His brain was in such a tumult that he could do nothing, however—nothing but upbraid himself for his folly and madness.

"What have I done—what have I done?" he moaned, as he thought of the anguish that he must have inflicted upon the poor girl, who had slowly pined away, and was now dying—dying through his blindness and want of faith in her poor, sweet, gentle, loving heart. The thought was maddening.

He tried to excuse himself—pleaded his own term of bitter suffering, but could get no absolution from his own stern judgment. He had doubted one who was all that was purity and truth, and here was his punishment—a bitter one indeed!

He prayed mentally that she might be spared, that he might ask her forgiveness—forgiveness that he knew he should receive—and then covered his face with his hands, as a feeling of hope came upon him that he might yet be able to save her. He might, he thought, bring joy to her poor young heart even yet.

A sudden stoppage nearly threw him out of the cab, and looking up hastily, it was to find that a barrier was across the street, from which hung a red lantern.

The street was narrow, and he could see beyond, while the driver was sulkily backing and turning his horse, that the paving-stones were all up, and the inevitable long fosse and hill of earth lay by the side.

He sank back shuddering, for it looked as if a grave were yawning in the path; and, with a low moan of despair, he covered his face once more, and tried to reason with himself that this was merely a superstitious fancy.

But all in vain. There was the long, dark cutting fixed upon the retina of his eye; and he could see nothing else as the cab slowly went back over much of the ground already traversed. What was more, his distempered fancy magnified and added to it, so that he could see trains of mourners, the clergyman, hear the solemn words of the burial service, and these the revolving wheels and the rattling cab kept repeating, till at last it settled itself down into a constant reiteration of the words, "In the midst of life we are in death," "In the midst of life we are in death," till he grew almost frantic, and stopped his ears in vain against the weird, funereal sound.

At last, after wearying himself by trying to bring reason to bear, the cab reached the comparative freedom of London Bridge, and then he began to think of the hour, and wondered whether there would be a train.

"Perhaps I shall be in time," he thought, as he sprang out of the cab, and, paying the fare, ran up to the doors, where a porter was standing.

"You should have gone to the other gate, sir," he said.

"No, no," he replied, hastily. "Main line. I want Hastings."

"Last train for there was at 8.43, sir."

"What time is it now?" he gasped.

"Ten fifty-five, sir," replied the man.

"But—but is there nothing more to-night—say, to take me part of the way?" he exclaimed, for he was mad with the desire to be moving.

"No main line train to-night, sir. Nothing till six in the morning."

"How long would it take to get a special ready?" asked Tom.

"Oh, not very long, sir. I dessay they'd get you off in half an hour. Costs a deal, sir—'bout pound a mile."

"Where is the superintendent?"

"This way, sir," said the man; and, following him, he was taken to the official's house, just in time to catch him before he retired for the night.

"I want a special train—engine and carriage—down to Hastings immediately," said Tom, hardly able to speak for agitation.

The superintendent looked at him curiously, as if he doubted his sanity.

"It is only excitement—trouble," he said. "It is a case of life and death. A dear young friend."

"All right, sir," the superintendent said, quickly. "I see," and there was a look of sympathy in his eyes. "But I am only a servant of the company. The charge for a special train is high."

"If it is a thousand pounds, man," cried Tom, "I must have it."

"It won't be that, sir," was the reply; "nor yet a hundred." Then naming a sum, Tom hastily placed it in his hand, and the superintendent left him.

He was back directly, and Tom accompanied him then to the telegraph office, where he gave certain instructions, and the clerk began clicking the instruments in his cabinet very forcibly.

"Sending word on for a clear line," said the superintendent. "Warning for the special."

"How long will they be?" asked Tom.

"What, with the special? Oh, not long. There was an engine with steam nearly up. But you had better take some refreshment before you go. The place is closed, but come to my room."

"I could not touch anything," said Tom.

"But you have no wrapper or rug," said the superintendent.

"No," he said. "I came in a great hurry."

"You must let me lend them to you," continued the superintendent; "and, excuse me, you have given me all your money. You had better keep the gold; you are sure to want some cash."

He handed him back the money, and Tom took it mechanically.

"I cannot thank you now," he said, in a choking voice. "Some day I may."

"I hope, so, sir," the superintendent said, cheerily; "and that the young lady will come and thank me too."

"Heaven grant she may!" Tom said, with quivering lip, and he turned away to hide his emotion; while the superintendent turned back to his office, leaving Tom walking up and down the platform, where the lamps quivered in the night breeze, and the whole place looked ghostly, dim, and cold.

Away to the right the station was bright and busy, for from there started the local traffic; and trains, with people from the theatres and places of amusement, left from time to time for the various suburban villages of the south-east of London; but where he stood all was shadowy, and in keeping with his terrible journey.

"There, sir—slip that on," said the pleasant voice of the superintendent. "Here's a rug too, and my flask, with some brandy and biscuits in one of the pockets of the Ulster. You'll find it cold, and you'll turn faint when you get on your journey. Oh! here she comes."

There was a sharp whistle, and Tom could see the lights of an engine passing out of a shed, to run a little distance down the line, then back on to another, and come smoothly along to where they stood—hissing, glowing, and bright.

Tom saw at a glance that there was only an engine, tender, one carriage, and the guard's break; and turning to the superintendent—

"Can't I ride on the engine with the driver?" he asked.

"No, sir," he replied, sharply. "In with you, sir."

The superintendent opened the door of the saloon carriage, and shut him in. Then Tom heard him give a few quick, decisive orders to the guard, there was another sharp whistle, he waved his hand from the window, and the superintendent leaped on to the step.

"Tell them to go as fast as possible," exclaimed Tom, as the train was gliding past the platform.

"I have," he said, quickly; "full express speed. Hope she'll be better. Good night."

As he spoke, he leaped off at the end of the platform, and, shrieking and snorting, the little special went rather slowly along, past hissing goods engines, and long black-looking trains, such as might be the funeral processions of an army. Lights flashed here and there, and far to right and left shone the glow of great London; while the big illuminated clock of the Parliament Houses loomed out of the darkness like a dull, fog-dimmed moon.

"They are crawling!" Tom exclaimed, as he started up to look out from the window. But as he did so, the wind was already beginning to whistle more quickly by his ears; they were clear of obstructions, and speed was getting up rapidly. There was the quick throbbing beat of the engine, a crash as they passed under bridge after bridge, and soon after, as the engine gave a weird scream, they seemed to skim through a long station, whose row of pendant lights ran together like closely-strung golden beads; and then, as Tom sank back in his seat, he felt the carriage begin to vibrate from side to side, as he knew that the telegraph had flashed its message that the line was clear, and that, ever increasing in speed, they were off and away through the black darkness of the night—the best doctor in London speeding to the patient dying to hear his words.



CHAPTER XVII.

A RIDE BY NIGHT.

WITH the speed of the special train the excitement seemed to increase; but, for a time, Tom's attention was taken up by the stations they passed, and he tried hard to recall their names, referring at the same moment that they passed through to his watch, so as to endeavour to calculate the speed at which they ran.

But soon they were going so fast that he ceased to hold his watch up to the thick glass lamp in the roof, and he missed count of the stations, unable to tell one from the other, seeing merely a streak of light directly after the warning shriek of the engine which told of their coming. And now, as he threw himself back, and began to think once more of his dreadful trouble, the roar and beat of the engine resolved itself into the words that had troubled him before; and with feelings of anguish that he could not express, he sat listening to the reiteration.

"In the midst of life we are in death," "In the midst of life we are in death!" and, with a bitter groan of anguish, he bent down and wept like a child.

But for the relief those tears afforded his throbbing brain, he would soon have been suffering from incipient fever. The relief was but short, though, and he rose to gaze out of the window at the black darkness. Then, removing his hat, he lowered the glass and leaned out, letting the cold night air blow upon his heated face as the train rushed on.

All was black darkness, save the glow shed by the rushing train, and he could make out nothing but that they were dashing on at a frightful pace, seeming to tear up the very earth as they thundered along. Once or twice speed was slackened, with the engine whistle going loudly, and, looking out, Tom could see far ahead a red point of light, which, as they neared it, changed

into a green, when, with a triumphant shriek, the engine panted on once more, and they swept by a station and a hissing engine attached to some long goods train, whose guard stood by with a lantern in his hand, fresh from the operation of shunting to allow the special to pass.

"Faster, faster," he began repeating to himself, as, in spite of his efforts to master the fancy, he kept hearing the words into which the noise of the train resolved itself, though as he leaned out again, he felt a sensation of joy, for he was being borne nearer and nearer to where his darling lay.

Then he would walk to and fro in the narrow space that formed the saloon carriage, the difficulty of preserving his equilibrium taking up some of his attention, and relieving his mind from its dreadful strain. But it always came back to the throwing himself back on a seat, to sit and listen to those dreadful words; and at such times he was for ever seeing the open grave, the funeral procession, and in a despair that was almost maddening he told himself that by his folly he had dashed away the cup of happiness from his lips, and that if Jessie died he would be little better than a murderer.

"My poor darling—my poor darling!" he moaned, and then her sweet, pensive face seemed to look up in his, and he was once again with her in the days of their early love. "And are those times never to come back again?" he asked aloud; to get back for answer the constant dull repetition, "In the midst of life we are in death," "In the midst of life we are in death," till he groaned in the anguish of his heart.

Onward still, with a rush and a roar, through tunnels, with a quick, sharp crash as if wood and brickwork had come into contact; and then on again. Over bridges, with a strange quivering vibration, and a dull metallic roar, and on once again through the black darkness, till the engine began to shriek once again, and the speed slackened,

grew slower and slower, and ended by the little train gliding alongside of a platform.

The guard was at the door, as Tom let down the window, and met his question with—

"Tunbridge, sir. Take in water. Engine's been detached. Back directly."

"Don't lose a moment."

"No, sir. Like to get out, sir?"

"No."

Tom threw himself back in his seat, and waited impatiently what seemed an hour, but what was really only five minutes, when just as he was rising to thrust his head from the window, there was a slight concussion, the rattle of chains, and he knew the engine was once more attached.

"Right away!" A whistle from the guard, an answering shriek from the engine, and they glided along the platform, where the night porter on duty looked curiously at the carriage where the young man sat, after giving the signal to start, and in a few minutes, always gathering speed, away they went once more, faster and faster, into the darkness of the night.

It was refreshing to feel the wind blowing against his cheeks, even though at times he could hardly get his breath; but as he gazed forward it was almost with a feeling of wonder that they had had no accident, so black was all ahead.

From time to time a goods train or the mail dashed by them in the opposite direction, while as often they rushed by carriages which stood in sidings until those on an urgent way had passed. At last, after trying all he could to contain himself, and grow calm, and fit to see the poor sufferer whom he feared to encounter, he sat in despair listening to the dreadful fancied utterances of the train.

With a prayer on his lips that it might not be too late, he lowered the window on the other side, and gazed out through the darkness in the direction that he believed to be the one where Jessie lay. "We must be near now," he felt; and he began to look out eagerly for the town, which once reached his journey would soon be ended.

They seemed to be going at a tremendous speed; and, once more returning to his seat, he was in the act of taking out his

watch, when the whistle began to pierce the black night air; and directly after, there was a sharp crash, a stunning blow, the end of the saloon carriage seemed to come suddenly upon him and he knew no more.

Tom's next recollection was of feeling drowsy, and being troubled by some one holding a lantern close to his face. There was a buzzing of voices about him, and, close by, the glare of a fire, which flared and crackled loudly. Men were moving about, and they would not leave him alone, so it seemed to him, ending by lifting him up, and placing him carefully upon cushions, which cushions they had laid upon a gate; and then he was carried some distance to a well-lighted room, where he seemed to go to sleep.

He must have lain some hours quite insensible, for it was broad daylight when he came thoroughly to himself, and found he was upon a mattress in the waiting-room of a little station.

"Where am I?" he said, wonderingly, as it seemed that the troubled journey must have been all a dream.

"At Broxton," was the reply, and a gentleman, whom he immediately set down to be a doctor, came forward.

"But how—what is it? I remember now!" he exclaimed, with a dull, aching pain in his head and arm—"there was an accident to the train."

"Yes," was the reply. "A couple of goods trucks that were being shunted ran back down the incline, and met the special train you were in, and wrecked it. You had a narrow escape, sir."

"The driver—stoker—guard?" he said, eagerly.

"A bit cut and shaken, but you are the great sufferer."

He lay still for a few minutes, trying to collect himself; and then all came clear once more.

"I see," he cried. "Left arm broken—head contused—cut or two. Much loss of blood, doctor?"

"Not much," he said. "A fortnight's quiet. Well, I think— My dear sir, are you mad?"

"I hope not," said Tom, sitting up. "There, don't touch me, doctor. I can judge by my feelings that my case is not serious. When is the next down train?"

"In half an hour, sir," said a fresh voice, and a man he had not seen came from behind the extemporized couch.

"Help me to put on my coat and waist-coat," he said. "Doctor, I'm much obliged for what you've done; but I was travelling special to a case of emergency. I must go on, if it kills me."

"I will not be answerable for the consequences if you do," the doctor said, tartly. "Fever is almost certain to supervene if you exert yourself, and then I would not give *that* for your life."

That was a snap of the fingers, evidently given to get rid of some snuff.

"Make me a sling for this arm," he said; and one being extemporized with a handkerchief, he had to fight hard to master the


deathly sick feeling that kept attacking him; but he persevered—had the bandages on his head replaced by strapping where his hair had been cut away on account of a couple of ghastly cuts; and finally had himself led to the platform, where he sat down waiting.

Twice over the doctor tried to persuade him not to go; but he felt that he must, even at the risk of life; and at last, on the morning train coming up, he stepped in, feeling deathly sick and faint, and, leaning back, reached Hastings at last, hardly able to crawl.

It was with a sense of dizziness that he could hardly counteract that he stepped into a fly, and gave orders to the man to drive to Richard Shingle's house; and then once more he appeared to sink into a dreamy state, in which he seemed to be always hearing the words—"In the midst of life we are in death," and then came a long blank.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GILDED PILL.

 NE morning, when the sun was making the sea shimmer and glisten like so much frosted silver in constant motion, Tom Shingle awoke, calm and placid, after a long, burning time of fever, to find the soft, pleasant face of Mrs. Shingle bending over him; and on seeing him awake, she stole gently away, when, while Tom lay wondering and trying to make out what it all meant, and whether it was a dream, the door once more opened, and he knew he was awake, for Jessie appeared, to run sobbing to his bedside, and clasp him in her loving arms.

Invalids recover fast under such circumstances. In his character of the best doctor in London, sick and injured as he was, Tom's coming had effected Jessie's cure; and now, in turn, she nursed him back to health, ready to become his wife when he should ask her to crown his joy.

It was not long first; for at a meeting,

one day, old Hopper had proposed to Dick that they should put down so much apiece for the young folks, and this was done without their consent, the donors running a kind and generous race as to who should do most.

Old Hopper beat, for he was very wealthy.

"Better in wealth than health," he said, as, back in town, they were walking one day by the great hoarding in the Strand. "Dick, my lad, we'll have a good tune-up to-night, and go through the old pieces; then I'm coming home here, and I'm going to take some of these. They say they're good."

As he spoke he pointed with his stick to a great placard, on which, in red letters, appeared the words—

"THE GILDED PILL!
FOR EVERY ILL."

"No, no," said Dick, with the puzzled look coming on his face. "I wouldn't do that."

"Hey? not do it? why not? Speak up: this traffic makes such a noise."

"Oh, take them if you like," said Dick, smiling. "They won't hurt you."

"How do you know?" cried Hopper, testily. "Everybody says they're good. Hey? How do you know?"

"That's my secret," said Dick, laughing.

"Your what? Look here, what do you mean, Dick?"

"I say take 'em if you like—hundreds of thousands do. Small boxes one and three-halfpence, large boxes two and nine, with the Government stamp."

"Bah! I know all about that," said Hopper, rattling the box close to his ear, and then opening it, to show a dozen boluses covered with gold foil. "Have one?"

"No, thanks," said Dick, smiling. "I know 'em by heart—compound rhubarb and a little new bread. That's my secret, my fortune, old lad."

"What?" cried Hopper. "Hey? what? You made your fortune with these?"

"Yes," said Dick, "the murder's out now. My bright idea was—

"The Gilded Pill."





